









A Pair of Sixes

BY
EDWARD PEPLE



SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York



A PAIR OF SIXES

A FARCE IN THREE ACTS

BY
EDWARD PEPLE

Author of "The Littlest Rebel", "The Prince Chap",
"The Love Route".

COPYRIGHT, 1914, BY EDWARD PEPLE

COPYRIGHT, 1917, BY EDWARD PEPLE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "A PAIR OF SIXES", being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States, is subject to a royalty, and anyone presenting the play without the consent of the owner or his authorized agents will be liable to the penalties by law provided. Application for amateur acting rights must be made to SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York. Application for the professional acting rights must be made to the American Play Company, 33 West 42nd Street, New York.

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND

PS3531
.E47 P2
1917

Especial notice should be taken that the possession of this book without a valid contract for production first having been obtained from the publisher, confers no right or license to professionals or amateurs to produce the play publicly or in private for gain or charity.

In its present form this play is dedicated to the reading public only, and no performance of it may be given, except by special arrangement with Samuel French.

SECTION 28.—That any person who wilfully or for profit shall infringe any copyright secured by this act, or who shall knowingly and wilfully aid or abet such infringement, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment for not exceeding one year, or by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than one thousand dollars, or both, in the discretion of the court. Act of March 4, 1909.

✓

©CLD 47814

SEP 15 1917

no 1.

new \$20'17

420

3

A PAIR OF SIXES

ACT I

DISCOVERED:—SALLY PARKER, *the stenographer, seated at the type-desk, writing furiously on the typewriter. KROME, the book-keeper, seated at the high desk U. C. working over his books.*

AT RISE:—*At the rise of the Curtain, KROME rises quickly, picks up the ad. dummy from the high desk, and goes swiftly to the desk D. L.—places dummy on same and makes entry in large book. Sits by the desk. At the same time the Office Boy has entered from U. L. with two letters—one addressed to the stenographer, the other to the Book-keeper. The Office Boy starts to R., walking very fast,—the SHIPPING CLERK has entered from U. R. and moves rapidly to L. They (the OFFICE BOY and the SHIPPING CLERK)—bump violently into each other as they meet C. and continue on their way, glaring at each other over their shoulders.*

SHIPPING CLERK. (*Speaking over his shoulder as he goes to up-stage side of the desk D. L.*) Look where you're going, you little red-headed simp!

JIMMY. (*Going to the type-desk, R., speaking scornfully over his shoulder*) G'wan yer poor nut!

SHIPPING CLERK. (*Savagely*) Who's a nut?

KROME. (*Turning half around in his chair and waving to JIM and the CLERK to be quiet, raises his voice so as to top them*) Here, here!

SHIPPING CLERK. (*Still glaring at JIMMY, hands bills to KROME*) Bills of laden.

(KROME hands him paper in return and clerk exits
U. R., scowling at JIMMY.)

JIMMY. (*Giving letter to Stenographer*) Letter for you, Miss Parker. (*Starts to L. to KROME*)

SALLY. (*Holding up typewritten telegraph blank*) Here, Jimmy, ring for a messenger and get this off in a hurry.

(JIMMY, who has reached c. turns back to SALLY.)

KROME. (*Holding up order to JIMMY*) And ask the shipping clerk about this order, (JIMMY on hearing KROME's voice stops and turns to him) it's over a week behind and the customers kicking like a mule.

(JIMMY starts to KROME when SALLY again calls.)

SALLY. (*Waves the telegraph form at JIMMY*) Here, Jimmy, when I call you, come.

JIMMY. (*Hesitates a second between the two, then makes a frantic dash to KROME, takes the order which KROME holds out to him, then crosses back of the desk c. to SALLY—quickly—speaks as he walks*) Aw, how many rings does yer want me to be doin' at de same time? I ain't no orty-me-bile truck! (*Jerks the telegram away from SALLY*)

SALLY. (*Rather amused*) No; you're a noisy little run-about that needs more spanking than you do cran'-ing. (*Starts to write*)

JIMMY. (*Holding the order and the telegram in*

his right hand and using his L. to describe what he says) Say! If you was my wife do you know what I'd do?

SALLY. (*Stops writing—turns to* JIMMY. KROME *works the A. D. T. call on the wall R. of the high desk c.)* What?

JIMMY. (*Sentimentally*) I'd take you on a weddin' trip to de very end of de world!

SALLY. (*Laughs lightly, amused. KROME goes to the high desk to work on books—dips pen in the ink and pauses to hear. Turns slightly to R.)* Oh, that would be nice.

JIMMY. (*Pointing down with hand*) An' den I'd drop you off.

SALLY. (*Furious,—KROME tries to suppress laughter*) Oh! (*Slaps JIMMY soundly on the left cheek with her right hand*)

KROME. (*Severely*) Get out of here. (*JIMMY scampers out up R. holding hand to cheek. MRS. NETTLETON enters at this point from U. L. As she closes the door, KROME turns quickly and SALLY works the typewriter very hard. As MRS. NETTLETON starts R. by way of below the desk c.)* Oh! Mrs. Nettleton. Come right in! (*Moves chair L. of the desk c. to her and motions her to sit*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Pointedly ignoring SALLY as she comes down*) How do you do, Mr. Krome? (*As KROME indicates the chair*) No, thank you, I haven't the time. Is Mr. Nettleton in his office?

(*SALLY steals a glance at MRS. NETTLETON as she writes.*)

KROME. (*In his politest tone*) He's out at present. I'm expecting him any moment.

MRS. NETTLETON. Oh! How very annoying. (*Glances at watch, which hangs on chain about her neck. MRS. NETTLETON has by this time reached*

the R. stage corner of the desk c. She stops and faces KROME) I 'phoned him I would be here at twelve! (*Starts to L.*) I'll speak to Mr. Johns!

KROME. (*Comes down stage and steps in front of MRS. NETTLETON as she passes left end of desk c.*) Sorry, Mrs. Nettleton, but he's out too. Went over to the bank.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*With impatient gesture*) I declare men are never in a place when we want them. (*SALLY pounds the typewriter with a vengeance. MRS. NETTLETON crosses to her, speaking as she goes. KROME goes to high desk U. C. to R. of the high stool in front of same*) Er—Miss Parker, please—please—it makes me nervous. (*SALLY stops writing at once, and sits in an exaggerated straight manner, clasping her hands in her lap. MRS. NETTLETON crosses to the entrance U. L. by way of the up-stage side of the desk c. Speaks as she walks*) Tell Mr. Nettleton that I have gone to the station to meet Miss Cole!

KROME. Yes'm, I will.

MRS. NETTLETON. I'll be back in a little while, and wish to see him particularly. (*Looks at KROME as she pauses a second*)

KROME. (*A step to MRS. NETTLETON, nods his head*) Yes'm, I'll tell him.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Pushes the office railing gate slightly open, then turns to KROME again. It just occurs to her*) And say to him that I hope no stupid business will interfere with my appointment a second time. (*MRS. NETTLETON exits U. L.*)

KROME. (*Bowing*) Yes'm. Good morning. (*Goes to the high desk U. C. Picks up some papers*)

SALLY. (*Mischievously*) Say, Charlie, what an old fool Adam was to have ever parted with that extra rib.

KROME. (*Taking papers and going to desk c. and putting them on the up-stage L. side of same*)

Well, it wasn't his fault; he was asleep at the time.

SALLY. And you men have never waked up since. Miss Parker—please, please—it makes me nervous. (SALLY imitates MRS. NETTLETON in above speech, jerks paper from her typewriter viciously and lays it on desk; inserts two new sheets and a carbon)

KROME. (*Who rather likes MRS. NETTLETON, speaks sharply*) What's the matter with Mrs. Nettleton!

SALLY. (*With a short angry laugh*) Oh, she's nice enough to you. You wear trousers! But did you see the way she looked at me? (KROME goes to the chair by the desk L. SALLY dates letter on the machine and looks up) Thinks every woman on earth is crouching like a tiger, waiting to pounce on her precious pudgy husband. And I'll tell you, Charlie, if this Miss Cole that Mr. Johns is so struck on, isn't an improvement, I'm going to quit my job. (*Goes up-stage of the desk c. to L. of same, stands behind the chair L. of the desk*)

KROME. Well, I'm not worrying about the women, it's the men! I don't see why the bosses can't get on. A big, fine business, increasing every month, and yet they are quarrelling and fighting all day long.

SALLY. (*Polishing her nails with her handkerchief*) Well! I know why, Vanity! (KROME sits in the chair by the desk L., makes entry in large book as he listens to SALLY) Mr. Johns invented a violet sugar coating for a pill and believes he's made the world, and as for Mr. Nettleton—he's making a perfect show of himself. (*Sits on the chair L. of the table c., crosses her left leg over her r., exposing her calf; is quite unconscious of the fact, and continues polishing her nails*)

KROME. (*Speaks as he works on the book*) That's so. It's all right to quarrel when you have

a failure, but our two bosses are the only two idiots I ever heard of, who couldn't get along when they had a success.

(JIMMY enters from U. L., comes down between KROME and SALLY. Speaks as he walks.)

JIMMY. Mr. Krome, de shippin' clerk says—
(He stops abruptly, looking at SALLY'S stockings out of the corner of his eye)

KROME. (On hearing JIMMY'S voice, stops writing and raises his head, without turning around to hear what he says. After a second when JIMMY does not continue) Well—what?

JIMMY. (Scratching his head in an endeavor to bring to mind the forgotten message, but still gazing steadily at the hosiery) Well—he did say sumptin'—but—(Cranes his head forward to get a better look) it's gone clean out of me head.

KROME. (Turns, catches JIMMY'S look and follows glance. His face beams, and takes on a broad grin. He turns further about in his seat in order to get a better view. Scratches his head with a ruler) Well, you take your head out there and keep your eyes on your work where they belong.

SALLY. (Looks up and sees the situation. Gives a startled shriek, and springs to her feet) Oh! And you can do the same with yours! (Takes a few steps R. and looks at them indignantly. JIMMY and KROME snicker)

JIMMY. (Catching sight of Mr. NETTLETON through the office door U. L., shouts in alarm) Here comes Mr. Nettleton!

(SALLY makes a dash for the typewriter, sits and works fast. KROME rises and holds place. Mr. NETTLETON enters U. L., puts his hat on the hat-rack L. of the high desk, on the peg down

stage side of the rack, then crosses to down R. by way of above the desk c., lays the newspaper he carries on the front of the desk R. side.)

KROME. (*As Mr. NETTLETON enters*) Er—Mr. Nettleton—your wife was here a few minutes ago, sir. She said she had an appointment with you.

NETTLETON. (*Snapping his fingers, as he remembers*) That's so—by Jove! Did you say I was called out on an important engagement?

KROME. (*Puzzled*) No sir, I didn't know you had one.

NETTLETON. (*Looks at him in disgust*) I hadn't! But where's your imagination!

KROME. (*Somewhat alarmed*) But—

NETTLETON. (*Waving him to stop*) I know—used it all up on your own family. (*Starts to his office R., then stops and turns to KROME*) By-the-way, Krome, did you finish that advertising dummy?

KROME. (*Briskly, glad to change the subject*) Yes, sir, I was just completing it as you came in. (*Takes up the large sheet on which various advertisements are pasted in the form of a page, and advances.* NETTLETON comes forward, meeting him at c. KROME holds the dummy up in his right hand) There's one thing, though, that—

NETTLETON. (*Jerks the sheet from KROME, looks severely at him, taps center of the sheet with his fingers*) What's this? (*Second's pause.* KROME looks uneasy. NETTLETON speaks sharply) I thought I told you—distinctly—that the center of this page was to be occupied by my ad., concerning the medicinal qualities of our pill. And here I find this junk about a fashionable violet coloring. (*Flings the sheet on the desk c.*) Bah! (*Crosses to R.*)

KROME. (*Terrified*) I did fix it up the way you told me, but Mr. Johns—

NETTLETON. (*Yelling at him*) Now never mind Mr. Johns! You do what I say, understand?

KROME. Yes sir.

NETTLETON. (*Sternly*) Then do it.

KROME. (*Picks up the dummy, speaks timidly*) I will, Mr. Nettleton, of course, but—but before this goes to the printer, I'll have to have Mr. Johns' O. K. and——

NETTLETON. (*Beside himself with rage*) There you go! Mr. Johns—Mr. Johns! 'Till I'm sick and tired of it. (*Shakes his finger threateningly at KROME*) I'm the head of this firm, and the sooner you realize it the better—(NETTLETON, at start of speech has walked up R. then down stage, he turns suddenly to catch SALLY smiling. *Speaks sharply*) You too, Miss Parker.

SALLY. (*Jumps, changes expression at once*) Yes sir!

NETTLETON. (*To KROME*) Think I'm carrying this whole business on my shoulders for *fun*? Who engaged you for this position, anyway?

KROME. Why—you did, sir.

NETTLETON. (*Crosses to R.*) All right then, carry out my orders or I'll *discharge* you. What this office needs is system, and I'm going to have it. System, get me; system! (*Exits R. I. Slams the door hard*)

SALLY. (*Laughs heartily. KROME goes quickly up to the high desk, first puts the dummy on the desk C. and from the high desk gets a white ad*) What are you going to do, Charlie?

KROME. (*Down to above the desk C., holds the ad in left hand with the right hand rapidly puts the coat of paste on the violet ad on dummy. Paste is on the desk C. Then holding the dummy up to view of the audience with his right hand, puts the white ad over the other one. Speaks as he works*) The only thing I can do. (*Exhibiting the white ad to*

the view of SALLY and the audience) I keep a stock of these on hand. Every time one boss kicks I paste his ad over the other one. (*KROME pastes the white ad over the violet one and stands smiling at SALLY, and waiting for her approval of his cleverness*)

SALLY. (*Laughs and nods to KROME*) How many have you now?

KROME. Half a dozen. By the end of the week—if I last that long—(*Points at the white ad on the dummy which he is holding up*) this pile will be an inch thick!

(*JOHNS enters from U. L., singing before he comes on.*)

SALLY. (*In a loud whisper to KROME*) Oh Lord! Here's the other one. (*Starts to write rapidly. KROME puts the dummy on the desk c. and moves quickly up to the high desk u. c. and begins work on ledger*)

JOHNS. (*Jerks NETTLETON'S hat from the hat-rack as he enters and flings it on the high desk and puts his hat on the rack. This is done so that the noise of the hat being flung on the high desk and the hat being put on the rack comes almost together*) Pass book, Krome. (*Throws the book on the high desk to KROME—goes to above the desk c., picks up the dummy*) Oh! Hello—finished the dummy, did you? Good boy! (*As he perceives the white ad in place of his own his face hardens—speaks sharply*) Krome! (*Goes to front of the desk c. with the dummy, turns and faces KROME, who comes down l. of him*)

KROME. (*Fearing the worst*) Yes sir?

JOHNS. (*Trying hard to control anger—holds the dummy up for KROME'S inspection—points at the ad.*) This is the fourth time I find this absurd,

inartistic and ridiculous cut in the middle of our advertising page. I told you to put mine there— (*Takes step to KROME, tears off the white ad and tosses it on the floor. Checks KROME as he starts to speak*) You ought to be able to understand a simple thing like that. If (*Throws the dummy on the desk c.*) you don't—

KROME. I do, Mr. Johns, but Mr. Nettleton—

JOHNS. (*Checking him*) Now, now—cut out Mr. Nettleton—(*Crosses to within a few feet of the door R. 1, raises his voice, so that NETTLETON will hear him, in his office*) half the time he don't know what he's talking about, and the other half he's talking about what he doesn't know. (*NETTLETON, who has been standing with his door half ajar, listening, slams it violently. JOHNS chuckles to himself with satisfaction, comes to front of the desk c., speaks sternly to KROME*) You do as I tell you!

KROME. (*At his wits' end*) But—but how can I, when *he* insists on the opposite?

JOHNS. And don't you know yet who the boss of this office is? (*Sits on the desk c.—looks keenly at KROME*)

KROME. (*Drops his eyes under the scrutiny of JOHNS*) I'm—I'm sorry, sir, but I don't!

JOHNS. (*Savagely*) Then I'll tell you—(*Suppressed giggle from SALLY—JOHNS turns, catches her—glares at her*) both of you—(*Back to KROME—swelling up*) I am! If it wasn't for *me*, this business would be just what it was the day I came in—a poor little sickly squirming baby, dying of cholera infantum. I've made it what it is and I want it kept so, take that in?

KROME. (*Steps to JOHNS*) Yes, sir, I understand you—perfectly—but—

JOHNS. If Nettleton wants to countermand my order, you send *him to me*—(*Crosses to R., raises his voice that NETTLETON may hear*) *me*—I'll show him who the boss is. (*Goes to the desk, picks up the dummy—taps the ad with his finger*) Now, fix up this dummy and don't pay any attention to that one—(*Points off in direction of NETTLETON'S office*) and do it in the next ten minutes—it goes to the printers to-day. (*Hands the dummy to KROME, and crosses to L.*)

KROME. (*Follows him a step—speaks desperately*) But listen, Mr. Johns—please—(*JOHNS turns and surveys him coldly*) I'm a poor married man—I'm doing my very best, I'm trying to follow instructions, but he—(*Pointing to R.*) says if I don't do it his way, he'll discharge me.

JOHNS. (*Feigning great concern*) He said that?

KROME. Yes sir. (*Hopefully*)

JOHNS. That's too bad! And you're a poor married man?

KROME. Yes, sir.

JOHNS. You love your wife?

KROME. Yes, sir.

JOHNS. Children?

KROME. Yes, sir.

JOHNS. Many?

KROME. Yes, sir.

JOHNS. Well, you do it my way, or I'll discharge you. (*Exits L. 1—slams the door*)

(*KROME gazes after him, rather dazed expression—sinks in chair L. of the desk C. SALLY bursts into loud laughter. KROME frowns at her.*)

KROME. That's right—laugh!

SALLY. (*Rises—still laughing—crosses to front of the desk C.*) I can't help it, you old dear. You looked so funny that I—Good Lord! (*As the buz-*

zer sounds, followed by the bell—SALLY stops—looks frightened—She runs to her desk and makes a frantic grab for her stenographer's book and pencil, and rushes back to desk C. The Buzzer and the Bell continue, one after the other until—)

KROME. (*Turning, with a grin*) Aha! Now you can see how funny it is.

SALLY. (*Terrified—looks from one office to the other*) Which one rang first?

KROME. (*Enjoying it*) Neither—it was both at once. (*Buzzer R.—until—*)

SALLY. Yes, I know, but if I go to Mr. Nettleton—(*She darts to the door R., as she is within a few feet of the door, Buzzer R. stops. Bell L. until—*) and if I go to Mr. Johns—(*She runs to L. As she reaches L. C., the bell L. stops. Buzzer R. She starts back to R. As she reaches C. both Buzzer and Bell— She stops C. as both the bell and the Buzzer sound at once and continue. She looks helplessly from L. to R. and in a tone of desperation turns to KROME and asks*) Charlie! Which one must I go to?

KROME. (*Still resentful*) Go to the one that will make you laugh—the most.

JOHNS. (*Entering from L. Comes on stage a few feet. Beckons SALLY*) Miss Parker, bring your book—(*Starts out L. KROME rises from seat, goes up-stage*)

SALLY. (*Meekly, starting after him*) Yes sir.

NETTLETON. (*Flinging open his door R. I, and coming on stage a few feet. In a voice of thunder*) Miss Parker! One moment! (*SALLY stops—turns, frightened. JOHNS, by this, has just passed through his door and stands listening, with his door ajar*) I thought you fully understood that when my buzzer sounded once, it meant that I wished to give dictation?

SALLY. (*Stammering*) Yes sir—I do understand it—but—

NETTLETON. (*Gruffly snapping her up*) Then bring your book. (*Turns to his office R.* SALLY follows)

SALLY. Yes sir.

JOHNS. (*Rushes on stage from office to L. C.*) Hold on there!

SALLY. (*Turns, hesitates between the two*) Yes, sir—but you see—Mr. Nettleton—(*Turns to Mr. NETTLETON*)

JOHNS. (*Motioning SALLY to go into his office*) Never mind him—I rang first.

NETTLETON. (*Fiercely*) You didn't! (*Takes step to C.*)

JOHNS. I did! (*Takes a step to C.*)

NETTLETON. (*Shaking his fist at JOHNS*) It isn't true and I don't care if it is! I'm the senior partner in this firm—and propose to have my rights. (*Turns to MISS PARKER*) Miss Parker, I'm ready with my mail. (*Starts a step R., SALLY starts after him*)

JOHNS. (*A step forward*) Oh no, you don't! The partners in this firm are equal! I own fifty per cent of the stock, don't I? And my mail is just as important as yours. Miss Parker, will come into my office—at once. (*Makes a movement toward the office, SALLY starts and NETTLETON steps quickly forward and grabs her by the wrist*)

NETTLETON. Will she?

JOHNS. (*Turns—takes in the situation, springs forward catching SALLY'S L. wrist. KROME comes hurriedly down L. and looks on in great alarm*) She will!

(NETTLETON and JOHNS speak the following together as they see-saw SALLY from one side to the other, SALLY tries to get away but cannot do so until finish of the speeches.)

NETTLETON. Now, see here, Johns; I've stood your impudence just as long as I'm going to and it's got to stop! You came in here as my assistant and you think you're the whole works! I won't have it, I tell you! and you'd just as well understand it right now!

JOHNS. (*At the same time*) If you think you're going to interfere with the company's correspondence, just because of your own pig-headed selfishness, you've got another guess. I've got to get off my mail and I don't propose to do it with my hands.

KROME. (*Raises his hand in protest—tries to talk over them*) Gentlemen! Gentlemen!

SALLY. (*With a final effort wrests herself free*) Oh, please—please! You are hurting my wrists! You—oh—(*Moves quickly to R. and turns and looks at them indignantly*)

NETTLETON. (*Goes to front of the desk—slaps same as he speaks*) See here, Mr. T. Boggs Johns, did you engage Miss Parker or did I?

JOHNS. You did! When I engage a stenographer, I'll get one that's worth something!

SALLY. (*Steps down*) Oh, you will! Then I'll have you to know that I'm not dependent on this position for a living. If you want a typist that suits you, get one! (*Stamps foot*)

JOHNS. I will! You're fired!

NETTLETON. She's not! (*Struts a step or two R., throwing out his chest*) I retain her as my stenographer. (*Crosses stenographer to the door R. I, elated, turns and faces JOHNS*) I'm glad to see that at least one of my employees recognizes the head of the firm. (*As she exits through the door R. I, which stays open until the exit of the stenographer*) Bah!

SALLY. (*Hurries out after NETTLETON. As she gets to the door—turns to JOHNS and imitates NETTLETON, but louder*) Bah! (*Runs out R. I—the door is slammed hard*)

JOHNS. (*Crosses to the door R. I, furious*) Why—(*Goes up R., speaking as he walks*) Krome—call up the agency and get me a personal stenographer (*KROME goes to the phone on the high desk U. C. L. of desk*) and I call you to witness that when I want her for my mail she's mine.

KROME. (*At the phone*) Yes sir. (*In the phone*) Hello—5060 Worth!

JIMMY. (*Enter from U. L., comes to above the desk c., points off L.*) Mrs. Nettleton is waiting outside, sir.

(*JOHNS takes JIMMY by the nape of the neck and gives him a shove towards the rail U. L. JIMMY falls over the rail but gets up quickly and dashes out U. L. JOHN goes down R. laughing and shaking head*)

KROME. (*In the phone*) Hello—yes—Eureka Digestive Pill Company—we want a good stenographer right away!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Off stage U. L.*) Thank you, Jimmy.

(*At sound of MRS. NETTLETON's voice, JOHNS goes to above the desk c., picks up some papers, turns his back to the entrance to the offices U. L.*)

JIMMY. (*Off stage U. L.*) You're welcome, Mrs. Nettleton.

(*MRS. NETTLETON enters U. L., comes on stage as far as the office rail.*)

JOHNS. (*Pretending that he is not aware of MRS. NETTLETON's presence and talking for her benefit*) If George Nettleton can have a devilish pretty typ-

ist all to himself, I'll have one too. Krome, get me a slasher, a peach!

MRS. NETTLETON. Good morning, T.

JOHNS. (*Turns, feigns surprise*) Ah! Why, Nellie, come right in. I'm glad to see you. (*Goes to the gate, opens it for her*)

MRS. NETTLETON. You ought to be. I haven't seen you for a month. Is George here? (*She crosses to R. by way of below the table or desk c. JOHNS goes R. by way of above the desk c.*)

JOHNS. Oh, yes, in there with Miss Parker.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Turns quickly—looks at JOHNS*) What!

JOHNS. (*Smiles*) His correspondence! (*Offers MRS. NETTLETON the chair R. of the desk c.*) Sit right here.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Sits—looks in the direction of NETTLETON's office with a troubled expression on her face*) Oh! But—I understood from him that he left that detail of the work to you.

JOHNS. (*Dryly*) U'm, yes—and lately I've been doing it with a fountain pen! (*As JIMMY enters U. L.*) Enter, Jimmy, through, not over. (*JIMMY grins, comes through the gate—goes to the roll-top desk L.—puts the package he carries on same—then stares R.*). Jimmy! (*JIMMY stops by the L. corner of the desk c.—leans on same—grins at JOHNS as he waits for the order*) Tell Mr. Nettleton—if he can spare the time—and he isn't too busy, his wife would like to see him.

JIMMY. (*Grins more than ever—snickers*) Yes sir. (*Exits R. I—drags his feet—JOHNS and MRS. NETTLETON smile at each other in appreciation of JIMMY*)

JOHNS. I'm just engaging a stenographer of my own—to get anything done at all.

KROME. (*Speaks as he hangs up the receiver and comes to above the desk c.*) I beg your pardon, sir.

JOHNS. (*Nods head to MRS. NETTLETON, to excuse him—she nods—JOHNS turns slightly to KROME*) Er—what is it, Krome?

KROME. They are sending over six for you to select from—three dark ones—two light ones—(*Holds up one finger*) and one red.

JOHNS. (*Turns to get a better look at KROME—then to MRS. NETTLETON and smiles*) I'll play the red.

(*KROME grins and exits U. R. JIMMY enters R. I, comes to within a few feet of MRS. NETTLETON and stands looking at her—grins.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Discovering that she is the object of JIMMY's attention, looks at JIMMY haughtily—speaks sharply*) Well, boy—well?

JIMMY. (*Grins*) Says he's busy and yer'll have to wait a minute. (*Exits U. R., drags feet*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Elevating her eye-brows slightly*) Well, upon my word! (*Crosses her hands resignedly*)

JOHNS. (*Grinning to himself, then turning sympathetically*) Anything I can do—while you are—waiting?

MRS. NETTLETON. Oh, no! No! (*Laughing nervously*) It doesn't matter—really! (*Again glancing R. then turning brightly*) By the way, who do you think is visiting me?

JOHNS. (*Delightedly*) You don't mean—Florence? (*As MRS. NETTLETON smiles and nods*) She wrote me that she would be here next Sunday?

MRS. NETTLETON. She came this morning—(*Looks at the office R. and back to JOHNS*) Didn't George tell you?

JOHNS. He?—No. (*Quickly, as MRS. NETTLETON looks at him*) I mean—it—it must have slipped his mind.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Steals glance at the door R.*) Yes, possibly. She'll be here in just a minute.

JOHNS. Good! Where is she?

MRS. NETTLETON. We met Mr. Vanderholt—quite accidentally—going to his office; and Florence stopped to chat with him.

JOHNS. (*A little taken back*) Oh! I see!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Teasingly*) You'll have to look out for Mr. Vanderholt. (*Wags finger*) He's awfully handsome and a dangerously clever lawyer.

JOHNS. Now, don't you worry over Van—Nellie. I have something for Florence that will make Van look like a ten cent piece at Tiffany's. (*Nods to MRS. NETTLETON—crosses to L. 1*) Excuse me?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Rising*) What is it, T?

JOHNS. (*Joyously*) You ask *her*—to-morrow! (*Laughs—exits L. 1*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Calling after him—crosses to c.*) I will—when I see it on her finger!

(*Loud laugh off R. 1, from SALLY and NETTLETON.*)

MRS. NETTLETON *looks in that direction—her face becomes very stern.*)

JOHNS. (*Calling back*) George is still busy. (*Closes the door L. 1*)

SALLY. (*Runs in from R. 1, laughing heartily—as she sees MRS. NETTLETON—the laugh ends in a gasp of surprise*) Oh! Er—how do you do, Mrs. Nettleton!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Regarding her severely and speaking with haughty dignity*) Quite well, thank you. (*SALLY goes quickly to the type desk and sits—is embarrassed*) I never knew before that—(*Crosses to R., speaking as she goes*) that Mr. Nettleton's correspondence was so vastly amusing. (*Exits R. 1*)

SALLY. (*Gaining courage as the door closes—makes face*) Huh!

TONY. (*Enters from U. L., comes in hurriedly—speaks as he opens the gate*) Ah! Miss Parker! (*Goes swiftly to front of the desk c. SALLY PARKER does like-wise—TONY speaks as he walks*) As sweet and as charming as ever, (*Takes off his hat and holds it in his left hand with cane—takes SALLY's right hand and holds it up to kiss*) I greet thee with a hungry kiss!

SALLY. (*Laughing*) Why, Tony, how do you do! (*Goes back to the type desk—sits*)

KROME. (*Enters U. R. with some papers—sees TONY—rushes to him—shakes hands with TONY from above the desk c.*) Hello, Tony! When did you get in?

TONY. (*Puts the cane and hat on the desk c., shakes hands with KROME*) Ten-fifty, limited, old chap.

KROME. How are you?

TONY. Still busy, boozy and begrimed. Where's Fighting George and Tackling T? (*Looks R. and L. as he mentions the names—and imitates a boxer and a football player*)

KROME. (*Loud whisper—points to L. and R. with both hands*) Offices.

TONY. In their offices? Good work! (*Picks up his cane and starts R.*) I'm in a hurry!

SALLY. (*Half rises—puts out hand in warning*) Er—Tony—His wife is with him.

TONY. (*Pauses a moment as SALLY speaks—then rushes at the door R. 1, and pounds it with his cane*) I don't want his wife—I want him! (*SALLY and KROME look at each other in alarm—KROME goes to the desk U. C. TONY makes a dash for the door L. and administers the same treatment to it*) I've got something that will wake 'em up till they'll never hit the sheets again. (*Goes to front of the desk c. Puts cane on same—stands waiting for the partners*) You watch little Tony

Toler! (NETTLETON and JOHNS enter and look at TONY in outraged astonishment,—he smiles and nods at them) Good morning, boys! Well, here I am! (As they both stride forward angrily, he holds out both hands to stop them) Now, don't get excited—please—please! (They stop within a few feet of TONY and stand looking at him) You are going to love me! (Speaks first to NETTLETON then to JOHNS) In fact I think you're going to slip me a little kiss! (As they raise their hands threateningly—he raises his voice and puts up hands to protect himself) But I don't want it. Say boys—(Slaps his hands—looks from JOHNS to NETTLETON) I've almost—I say, almost—landed the North-western Drug Company . . .

NETTLETON. What!

JOHNS. (Slaps Tony on the back) Good boy!

TONY. (Addressing first one and then the other) Worked it through their President, Mr. Sammy Applegate. A big man—(Slaps hands) and a live wire. He's in town now—(Gleefully) On his bridal trip,—and if I can get him here in his present condition—(Kisses his hand to heaven) He's ours!

JOHNS. (Enthusiastic) Great! When will you bring him?

TONY. (Change of tone) That depends.

NETTLETON. On what?

TONY. On you! (Very brisk and business-like) Of course it's not in my contract, but both of you promised, that the day I brought in the scalp-lock of the Northwestern, you'd make me a partner in this firm with a quarter interest and ten per cent commission on my sales. (As they both move back slightly) Now, then, does it go?

NETTLETON. (A step or two R.) Well I—I don't know about that. The business has increased since then——

TONY. (*Snaps him up*) So has the Northwestern's business. They control the patent medicine trade west of the Mississippi. I'll double your profits and put you where you ought to have been three years ago. (*Change of tone*) Question: Do I come in? (*Folds arms—looks at NETTLETON*)

NETTLETON. Well, I don't know——

JOHNS. (*Emphatically*) You bet you do! (*TONY turns quickly and catches JOHNS by the hand with both his hands*) When I make a promise, I keep it. Go to it, Tony!

TONY. (*Shaking JOHNS' hand hard*) Thank you, Mr. Johns! (*Turns and faces NETTLETON*) Well, Mr. Nettleton?

NETTLETON. Well—I guess he's right. (*JOHNS swells up—TONY's face beams*) For the first time since I've known him. TONY laughs—JOHNS glares at NETTLETON) You bring Mr. Applegate and I'll sign the contract.

JOHNS. No, no, we'll sign the contract. (*TONY picks up hat and cane—starts to L. JOHNS stops TONY as he starts out*) Where did you nail him, Tony?

TONY. (*Stops, goes to center—again speaks, first to one then the other*) On the train, last night—A miracle! (*To JOHNS*) His bride ate soft shell crabs and a charlotte russe—(*Makes a face, rubs his stomach—the partners register*) then doubled up like a pretty little jack-knife.

NETTLETON. My, my!

JOHNS. (*Shakes head*) Too bad!

TONY. (*Nearly explodes*) Bad! The greatest thing that ever happened. (*JOHNS and NETTLETON draw closer*) I handed her a bow. (*Bows to JOHN, very low*) Then—(*Turns to NETTLETON*) I slipped her a couple of our digestive pills. I waited—with sweat upon my marble brow. (*Puts hand to head—and leans on his cane—JOHNS kicks*

away the cane—NETTLETON shakes his fist at him—TONY crosses to L. swinging the cane—then turns) In just one quarter of an hour, the pretty little jack-knife was—a smiling flower. (*Waves his hat in triumph*)

NETTLETON. (*Laughing*) Good business, great!

(TONY laughs—starts up L.)

JOHN. (*At L. corner of the desk c.*) Make a hit with Hubby?

TONY. (*Turns down-stage a step*) A hit! (*Comes close to JOHNS—puts his hat up to his mouth to keep SALLY from hearing him*) Say, for the rest of the trip he didn't know which was his bride and which was me. Well, I'm off. (*Laughs, goes up L. and turns at the rail*) I'll have him wrapped and tagged in twenty minutes. You watch little Tony Toler. (*Puts hat on the side of his head, waves to them—exits U. L.*)

JOHNS. (*Takes a step or two up-stage after TONY, then back to front of the desk c.*) Snappy little fellow, George; and he's going to make a first class partner.

NETTLETON. (*Loftily*) U'm, yes—and don't forget it was I who first employed him. You can't take that from me. (*Crosses to R. with a swagger*)

JOHNS. And two years ago when you wanted to fire him, I made you keep him, and you can't take that from me. (*Crosses to L.*)

NETTLETON. (*Turns at door R., glares at JOHNS*) You made me!

JOHNS. (*At door L.*) I did!

NETTLETON. (*Opens the door R.*) Bah!

JOHNS. (*Opens the door L.*) Bah—bah! (*They both slam the doors hard at the same time as they exit R. and L.*)

JIMMY. (*Enters from U. L., comes to above the*

desk to c.) Say, Miss Parker! Lady by de name of Cole, waitin', outside.

SALLY. (*Rising*) Cole? Mr. Johns' girl. Show her in.

JIMMY. (*Grinning*) She's some girl, too.

(FLORENCE COLE *enters* U. L. JIMMY *opens the gate for her.*)

FLORENCE. (*Going to c. above the desk c., speaks to JIMMY as he opens the gate for her*) Thank you, Jimmy! (JIMMY *grins and exits* U. L. FLORENCE *to SALLY*) Pardon me for interrupting you, but is Mrs. Nettleton here?

SALLY. Yes—with Mr. Nettleton. (*Starts down R. towards NETTLETON'S office*) Shall I tell her you—

FLORENCE. (*Quickly*) No, no, no! Don't interrupt them—please! But, would you mind saying to Mr. Johns, that Miss Cole is calling? (*Smiles at SALLY*)

SALLY. (*Cheerfully*) With pleasure, Miss Cole. (*Goes L., beaming*) That's something like it. (*Taps and enters* JOHNS' office L. as MRS. NETTLETON *enters from R. 1, comes on a few steps*)

FLORENCE. (*Crosses to MRS. NETTLETON—greets her as she goes*) Hello, Nell!

MRS. NETTLETON. Oh! You found the way, did you?

FLORENCE. I was escorted to the door—

MRS. NETTLETON. By Mr. Vanderholt?

SALLY. (*Enters from L. 1, goes to the type-desk and sits—speaks as she goes*) He'll be here in just a moment!

FLORENCE. (*Nods head to SALLY—Smiles at her—puts her hand bag on R. side of the desk c., and walks to L. by way of below the desk c.—Speaks as she goes*) Is this the pillery? (*Looks about*)

MRS. NETTLETON. Yes; this is where they toil and slave for us.

FLORENCE. (*Stands L. of the chair L. of the table C.*) My! And how prosperous they seem to be!

MRS. NETTLETON. Aren't they? But the best part of it is they get *along* so well together. (*SALLY laughs. MRS. NETTLETON looks at her—also FLORENCE. They express great surprise. SALLY, conscious of their attention, checks herself and types vigorously*) Most business partners are continually having their little differences, but George and T, are just like brothers.

(*SALLY again laughs—MRS. NETTLETON and FLORENCE look at her in annoyance—SALLY turns to the typewriter and becomes very busy.*)

FLORENCE. (*Looking from L. to R.*) Where are they now—? Rolling little purple pills?

MRS. NETTLETON. Florence! The idea! All that is done at the factory where George used to be before T was in the firm.

FLORENCE. I thought they went in together. (*Looks MRS. NETTLETON straight in the eye*)

MRS. NETTLETON. Oh dear *no*! George was the real originator of the business and, naturally, has the greater care and responsibility.

FLORENCE. (*In surprise*) Has he? Why, I judged from T's letters, that most of the labor fell on *him*!

MRS. NETTLETON. The *labor*—yes. George does the brain work—and gives it to T to carry out.

(*SALLY begins to laugh and as MRS. NETTLETON and FLORENCE turn, she claps a handkerchief to her mouth and runs out U. R. FLORENCE rises and follows her to the right end of the high desk U. C. MRS. NETTLETON glares—as*

the laugh dies FLORENCE comes to R. of MRS. NETTLETON.)

FLORENCE. Good gracious! (*Starts L. above the desk c.*) What's the matter with her?

MRS. NETTLETON. I don't know, I'm sure!

FLORENCE. (*Apprehensively*) Is she—er—T's stenographer?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Stiffly*) No—George's. T has just ordered several—of assorted colors—(*FLORENCE expresses relief*) Three darks—two lights—and one red.

FLORENCE. (*Laughs*) I hope he chooses the red!

MRS. NETTLETON. I hope for your sake she'll prove less humorous than that. (*Crosses to R., knocks on the door—opens slightly—calls. FLORENCE crosses to L. at the same time*) George dear, hurry, won't you? I'm waiting!

FLORENCE. (*At the door L.*) Did you tell T that I was here? You know there are two partners in this firm!

MRS. NETTLETON. I told him when I first came in. (*Quickly*) Oh, Florence, I have a secret—(*Beckons to FLORENCE—they both run to c.*) But don't say I told you! (*Indicates JOHNS' door*) He's been to Tiffany's—and while he didn't tell me—in so many words—

JOHNS. (*Enters from L. MRS. NETTLETON back a step—warns FLORENCE, who turns at sound of JOHNS' voice*) Why, Florence! (*Advances joyously*)

FLORENCE. (*Crosses to JOHNS*) T! How are you? (*FLORENCE and JOHNS catch hands and swing about, landing FLORENCE to L. of him*)

JOHNS. (*Beams on her*) Well, bless your heart! What bully good wind brings you down from Albany?

FLORENCE. Shopping. Came down on a flying trip, swooped upon Nellie, and trotted her along.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Crosses to JOHNS*) And I found I didn't have a cent of money in my purse, so I had to come here before going shopping.

JOHNS. And I'm grateful to *any* cause that brings two such charming ladies to my humble door—(*They all start off L. I. JOHNS between them—he takes them by the arms—FLORENCE is up-stage of him and NELLIE down-stage. NETTLETON enters from R. I, and stands frowning at the picture*) Enter!

NETTLETON. (*Gruffly*) H'm—Anybody going to speak to me? (*At the sound of NETTLETON'S voice all turn*)

FLORENCE. (*Crosses to NETTLETON with little laugh of pleasure*) Oh! Of course, how are you, George? (*GEORGE smiles, shakes hands with FLORENCE; JOHNS is not particularly pleased—FLORENCE then goes above the desk c. to L. to JOHNS*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Crosses quickly to MR. NETTLETON*) I'll speak to you. I forgot to tell you—(*As he looks at her in surprise*) I want some shopping money—

NETTLETON. (*Makes face—JOHNS and FLORENCE smile*) A novel idea.

MRS. NETTLETON. If you haven't the cash, I'll take a check.

JOHNS. Oh, Nellie! If you and Florence can wait for half an hour, I'd like to have you lunch with me.

(NETTLETON registers and turns away.)

MRS. NETTLETON. Thank you, T, but we haven't the time. Besides, I hardly think I ought to lunch with you. (*Goes to front of the desk c.*)

JOHNS. No?

FLORENCE. Why not? (*Looks from one to the other—smiles*)

MRS. NETTLETON. You haven't been up to dinner for nearly a month—has he, George?

NETTLETON. Huh! (*Walks up-stage R. FLORENCE and MRS. NETTLETON register*)

FLORENCE. Why, T.

JOHNS. (*Stealing glance at NETTLETON to note effect*) Er—I've been frightfully busy of late. George has only the manufacturing end of it and the principal and more important part of the business falls on me.

NETTLETON. (*Comes quickly down R., shouts in spite of himself*) What's that?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Speaking at the same time*) What?

JOHNS. (*Enjoying it—speaks to MRS. NETTLETON—while GEORGE stands glaring at JOHNS and controlling himself with great difficulty*) I mean that every firm has got to carry some dead wood.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Looks at JOHNS in surprise—NETTLETON nearly chokes*) George dear! What is it?

NETTLETON. (*Goes swiftly to MRS. NETTLETON, puts his arm about her waist and starts her to R., strives to hide his rage*) Er—Nellie! Come into my office, will you, I'll draw that check! (*Takes MRS. NETTLETON as far as the door R. I*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*As she is taken to the door*) But, darling, what is it?

NETTLETON. (*Opening the door R. I, MRS. NETTLETON stepping in a bit and turning to hear what is said. NETTLETON glares at JOHNS and speaks in angry sarcasm*) Nothing! Only—I'm afraid of taking up more of Napoleon's valuable time.

(*MRS. NETTLETON looks at NETTLETON in surprise and exits—quickly R. I. NETTLETON follows and slams the door*)

FLORENCE. (*Crosses to R. not knowing just how to take the outburst, JOHNS laughs*) My goodness! What's the matter with him?

JOHNS. (*Laughing and crossing to front of the desk c.*) Liver I guess, needs a couple of his own pills. (*Change of tone*) But look here! Surely you aren't going back to Albany to-night?

FLORENCE. (*Goes to JOHNS—smiles up at him*) Oh, but I must. Father's away and Mother is quite alone. (*Looking at him sideways*) Besides, you are not particularly glad to see me.

JOHNS. (*Very serious*) I'm *not*!—why not?

FLORENCE. (*Faces him—wags finger at him*) Because when I came to see you—especially—it took you just four whole minutes to come out of your cubby hole. I expected you to jump. (*Pretends to pout*)

JOHNS. (*Smiles*) Aha! But I had a reason! (*FLORENCE sits on the R. side of the desk c.*) I was digging in my safe for this! (*Looks for it—has trouble finding same*)

FLORENCE. (*Delighted*) Oh well, if it's nice, I'll forgive you. What is it? (*JOHNS finds the ring. He holds up the ring, she takes it and holds it up to admire*) Oh! A ring! Two diamonds and a ruby! It's perfectly exquisite! Who's it for? (*Begins to take off her glove rapidly*)

JOHNS. (*Earnestly, puts hands on the desk, leans close to FLORENCE*) For the finest, jolliest, loveliest, most beautiful, most perfect, little scout between Iceland and the Panama canal; for the greatest most glorious, most. . . .

FLORENCE. (*Raises hand to stop him—laughs*) Hold on, T! There's only *one* like that!! (*Holds up her finger and smiles at him*) Slip it on—with a wish, darling, with a wish.

JOHNS. All right! (*Posing ring with left hand*)

and catches FLORENCE'S hand with his right) I wish . . . (*JOHNS feels the ring on FLORENCE'S finger—turns and looks at her*) Hello, what's that ring?

FLORENCE. (*Fencing*) Oh, that ring?

JOHNS. Yes, that one around your finger.

FLORENCE. (*Smiles her sweetest*) That's mine!

JOHNS. (*Real serious*) Yes, I know—but who gave it to you—Mr. Vanderholt? (*Puts hands in pockets, takes a few steps left, turns*)

FLORENCE. (*Laughing*) Your lawyer? Why? T, don't you know if I had had a love affair with a lawyer, that he would have had the ring, not I? Are you satisfied? (*She smiles and JOHNS, after a second he smiles at her then they both laugh lightly*)

JOHNS. Perfectly. (*Goes to the desk, sits by FLORENCE—puts the ring on her finger—kisses her on the hand*) What do I get for mine?

FLORENCE. (*Coyly edges up to him until she presses close to him before she speaks*) It depends upon what you want. (*JOHNS puts his arms about her and squeezes her*) Oh don't! You mustn't kiss me here! (*Looks about in alarm*) Somebody might come in—don't!

JOHNS. (*Springs up from the desk, catches FLORENCE by the wrist and pulls her to L. stage*) Then come in here—my office!

FLORENCE. (*Hanging back—pleadingly*) Oh no—no! That would seem so cold blooded!

JOHNS. It won't be when you get it!

FLORENCE. No, maybe not, but—(*Looks quickly about—makes up her mind and turns back to JOHNS. JIMMY enters from up R. with some papers, starts slowly to L.*) I think I'll risk it here—quick! (*JOHNS takes her in his arms and gives her a kiss. They hold the picture—until JIMMY, who on suddenly seeing what is going on—bolts out the door*)

U. R., *banging same violently*—FLORENCE and JOHNS *jump and release each other*—FLORENCE *goes up-stage a few steps. Looks in the direction of the sound*—JOHNS *looks guiltily*) What was that?

JOHNS. (*Breathlessly—frightened tone*) I don't know—I guess it was my heart turning a double somersault! (*Starts quickly to FLORENCE*) Come on! Make it do it again! (*He runs after FLORENCE, who eludes him, running to R. back of the desk c., holds out her hands to ward him off—when she gets to R. of the chair of the desk c. she stops—puts up her hands and in a tone that JOHNS recognizes as meaning business—speaks—and JOHNS stops in his pursuit of her*) Oh no, I prefer it right side up! No, no, I mean it—(*Looking at the pill boxes on the desk c.*) My, what prettily colored boxes! (*Sits R. of the desk c., picks up a box of pills from the desk*)

JOHNS. (*Holds up a box of pills which he gets from the desk c.*) Aha! The secret of the firm's success. That color mine. (*As FLORENCE turns to him inquiringly*) George was in business first, but the pill he was putting up tasted so—er simply villainous, that the public said it would be—(*Stops himself just in time*)

FLORENCE. (*Smiles up at JOHNS, who stands above the desk c.*) Go on—say it—that's one half of matrimony. What's in the pills?

JOHNS. Eh?

FLORENCE. What are they?

JOHNS. (*Looks knowingly at FLORENCE—laughs—FLORENCE smiles inquiringly—JOHNS gives another little laugh*) What are they—what are they not? (*JOHNS motions FLORENCE to pay close attention*) Cincona, colchicum, (*As JOHNS mentions the different names, he makes a face to show how awful they taste—each one in the order he names them, being worse than the preceding—FLORENCE*

makes face in sympathy with JOHNS) aloes, asafetida, strychnine, sodium and a compound of rarified peptinoids.

FLORENCE. (*Makes face and laughs*) Waugh!

JOHNS. (*Nods—waves the box of pills*) Exactly. Then I came along and corrected it. Invented a sugar coating to take off the curse—and colored it with violet—(*Opens the box, shows her the pills*) Look! The present most fashionable tint. My work, my art! (*Strikes a pose—and looks at her for approval—she laughs and nods to him*)

FLORENCE. (*Mock tragic*) Do children cry for them?

JOHNS. (*Imitates tone*) They howl! (*Indicates the box*) In its present perfected state it is known as the little pill that fills the bill. (*Takes several boxes from the tray on the desk c. and extends towards her*) Take some along, won't you?

FLORENCE. (*Jumps to her feet—moves a few feet r. and faces him*) No—no—no thank you! I still have you to live for. (*They both laugh heartily*) Is this where your genius germinates? (*Crosses to L.*)

JOHNS. (*Following FLORENCE and crossing back of her to the door L., holds it open, motions her in*) The official cubby, walk in. (*As FLORENCE passes in*) This side of the office represents the brains and blood. . . . (*Jerking thumb over shoulder*) (*NETTLETON and MRS. NETTLETON enter*) That side the bone and fat! (*Exits into office L. I*)

NETTLETON. (*Crossing to L. in rage, goes up L. and back to L. of the desk c., speaking as he goes*) You hear that, Nellie! You hear that? He's the brains and blood! and I'm the bone and fat! Agh!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Coming to front of the desk c.*) Now, dear—don't! Perhaps he's only joking.

NETTLETON. (*Fiercely*) Joking — Joking?

(*Shakes his finger at MRS. NETTLETON*) I tell you, Nellie, he's doing it all the time! Continually knocking my splendid work and praising his own childish efforts to the skies. What's he done for the business, anyway? Nothing. (*Pounds the desk in accompaniment*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Trying to pacify him—soft tone—taking up one of the pill boxes from the desk c.*) Yes, dear, of course . . . but still, you must admit, that the violet coloring is beautiful. (*Tosses the box back in the tray*)

NETTLETON. (*Crosses to R., speaks as he goes—Sarcastically*) Beautiful! So is my bull pup but that's not his work, thank God.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Following as far as R. side of the desk c., speaks soothingly*) Now darling, don't, it will *never* do for such old friends to quarrel. T has been like a member of the family for years. Of course we all have our little weaknesses, but *you* don't seem to realize that sometimes *he* may be right and you *wrong*.

NETTLETON. (*Throws up his hands*) That's right! Take up for *him*! Run me down! I'm only your husband.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Reproachfully, as she sits R. of desk c.*) George!

NETTLETON. (*Storms to above the desk c.*) I tell you, Nellie, when a man's business troubles get into his home—it's just about time to quit. (*Sternly*) Hereafter, you keep out of it!

MRS. NETTLETON. Oh well, if you take *that* tone I'm rather sorry I came to see you. (MRS. NETTLETON rises, takes a step R. at the same time NETTLETON, who has been holding the check in his hand starts to put same in his inside coat pocket—MRS. NETTLETON sees the attempt and quickly snatches the check from him—folds it and puts it in her purse—as she goes R.) Give me my check, that's all I came for, anyhow.

NETTLETON. (*Registers his discomfiture—KROME enters from U. R. with some papers which he puts in the file U. R. NETTLETON shouts to him*) Krome! (*KROME takes a step forward all attention*) You tell that—(*Points to JOHNS' office—FLORENCE and JOHNS enter—NETTLETON glares at JOHNS, speaks sarcastically*) Never mind—there it is!

(*KROME gives a frightened nod and exits quickly up R.*)

FLORENCE. (*As MRS. NETTLETON starts to L. to JOHNS—she goes above table C. to GEORGE down R., speaks to NELLIE, as she starts to go*) Going, Nellie?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*As she crosses to JOHNS—speaks sarcastically*) Yes. We are in the way—of business! (*Affably to JOHNS*) Good-bye T. Come up soon—to dinner—won't you? (*Shakes hands with JOHNS*)

JOHNS. (*Grinning*) I will—the very first time George invites me.

NETTLETON. (*Scowling at JOHNS*) Huh! (*Turns his back*)

MRS. NETTLETON. Now don't you wait for him. Come to see me, good-bye! (*MRS. NETTLETON and JOHNS move up to the rail U. I. JOHNS opens it and MRS. NETTLETON steps outside and opens the outside door and stands talking with JOHNS*)

FLORENCE. (*Picks up her purse from the desk C. then shakes hands with NETTLETON*) Good-bye, George! I'm so glad to find you both so prosperous—and happy!

NETTLETON. (*Smiles to FLORENCE—then aside*) Happy! (*To FLORENCE*) Good-bye!

FLORENCE. (*Runs lightly up to the rail U. L. to JOHNS*) Good-bye, T.

JOHNS. (*Opens rail gate for FLORENCE and she steps just outside and turns to him*) Good-bye, Florence, I'll run up to Albany just as soon as I can trust George with the—er—critical affairs of business.

(NETTLETON and MRS. NETTLETON register.)

FLORENCE. Yes, do—and make it soon. Good-bye! (*Holds up the hand with the ring and JOHNS kisses it—then FLORENCE crosses, MRS. NETTLETON exits U. I., calling good-bye—MRS. NETTLETON follows—closing the door after her—JOHNS waves good-bye*)

(SALLY enters from U. R., goes to type desk; sits.)

JOHNS. (*Hums gleefully, goes to NETTLETON, does a dance step as he crosses—as he reaches NETTLETON—pulls his vest up and down*) Zit-Zit! (NETTLETON, whose nerves are on edge, jumps—JOHNS laughs heartily and skips to L.)

NETTLETON. (*Follows JOHNS as far as center—shakes his finger at him, speaks in anger and sarcasm*) Hold on there, Mr. Blood and Brains, the Bone and Fat are going to tell you something.

JOHNS. (*Smiling—takes a step to NETTLETON*) Yes? Pray do.

NETTLETON. (*Close to JOHNS*) I heard you, why did you make that statement to Miss Cole?

JOHNS. (*Airily, with an irritating smile*) From an inborn sense of justice and a love of truth.

NETTLETON. Truth, hell! And I'll tell you this—if you wait for an invitation to my house, you'll be playing music on a harp. (*Moves a few steps R.*)

JOHNS. And when I do come, you'll be attending to business for once—with a pitch fork! (*Few steps L.*)

NETTLETON. Well, I'll attend to business now. I've stood for you long enough and I'm going to dissolve this disgusting partnership, to-day!

(KROME enters U. R., comes down-stage as far as the type desk—takes some papers from same.)

JOHNS. All right, that suits me!

NETTLETON. Krome!

KROME. Yes sir.

NETTLETON. Call up my lawyer, ask him to come over—right away!

KROME. Yes sir.

JOHNS. Krome—you can say to my attorney—that I'm just as anxious to see him as Mr. Nettleton is.

KROME. Yes sir! (*Goes to the phone on the high desk U. C., takes off the receiver*)

NETTLETON. (*At the door R., holds same slightly open*) Nut!

JOHNS. (*At the open door L.*) Mut!

NETTLETON. What!

JOHNS. (*With gesture*) Tut—tut!

(NETTLETON and JOHNS go into their offices R. and L., slam the doors hard—SALLY and KROME jump.)

KROME. (*At phone*) Hello! 2480 Rector!

SALLY. (*At typewriter*) Say, Charlie!

KROME. Yes?

SALLY. This place reminds me of the man who had both hands cut off.

KROME. Well?

SALLY. (*Dryly—as she uses the rubber on a sheet of type paper*) And then he got the hives.

KROME. (*Laughs heartily. Then in phone*) Hello! That you, Mr. Vanderholt? Krome speak—

ing. Yes sir. Mr. Johns and Mr. Nettleton would like you to come right away, sir. (*Slight pause*) All right, sir. Thank you. Good-bye. (*Hangs up the receiver—sighs, walks down to the desk D. L., speaking as he goes*) I guess this is the finish for us, Miss Sally.

TONY. (*Enters from U. L. followed by MR. APPLGATE, he goes to L. of the desk C. MR. APPLGATE comes to L. of him*) Right this way, Mr. Applegate! (*Indicates KROME*) Our bookkeeper, Mr. Krome. (*APPLGATE and KROME bow*) Miss Parker, kindly announce Mr. Applegate. (*KROME exits quickly L. I, and SALLY R. I. TONY pushes chair L. of the desk C., towards MR. APPLGATE*) Have a seat! (*APPLGATE bows his thanks*) I want you to meet the members of my firm, a team! The finest pair that ever pushed a pill!

APPLGATE. (*Puts silk hat on the desk C.*) Thank you, Mr. Toler, it will be a pleasure. A perfect partnership, Mr. Toler, should run with the same degree of order and lack of friction—as the home affairs of a happily married couple. (*Has taken off his gloves and tosses them in his hat*)

TONY. (*Grimacing*) Yes. That's what we have here—just one long honeymoon. (*As JOHNS enters from L. followed by KROME, who stands in the doorway L. I. TONY crosses back of APPLGATE to JOHNS*) Mr. Johns, I have the honor to introduce—

JOHNS. (*Pushing TONY back and advancing with out-stretched hand to APPLGATE*) Ah! Mr. Applegate. (*TONY retreats a few steps up-stage in hurt astonishment*) This is, indeed, a pleasure. Johns is my name and. . . . (*As NETTLETON enters from R. followed by SALLY, who goes to the type desk and sits and watches proceedings—JOHNS crosses in front of APPLGATE to NETTLETON—who stands looking on—JOHNS slaps NETTLETON on the*

back and when NETTLETON resents it—makes faces at him, trying to make him understand that for appearances, they must for the moment bury their differences. He pushes NETTLETON forward to APPLEGATE, who drops down-stage a step and shakes hands with NETTLETON; TONY, SALLY and KROME register) Oh come in, George! Mr. Applegate, permit me to present my esteemed partner, Mr. Nettleton.

APPLEGATE. Well, well, well,—I am flattered, in fact. . . .

NETTLETON. Have a seat, sir.

(APPLEGATE takes a step L. JOHNS crosses to chair L. of the desk C. Makes the cross in back of NETTLETON and APPLEGATE; as NETTLETON starts for it beats him to it—pushes toward APPLEGATE—NETTLETON glares at him—TONY rushes forward to assist JOHNS, pushes him back. He goes to L. of the high stool by the high desk—JIMMY enters from U. R., puts some papers on the high desk. APPLEGATE sits.)

JOHNS. Yes do!

APPLEGATE. Thank you—thank you.

NETTLETON. (To APPLEGATE) Pardon me. (To JIMMY) Jimmy! (JIMMY runs to him) My cigars, and pick up your feet!

JIMMY. Yes sir! (Exits R., picking up his feet in an exaggerated manner—SALLY sticks her handkerchief in her mouth)

JOHNS. Don't trouble, George, mine are nearer. (Turns to KROME, speaks sharply) Krome, get my cigars, my private box! (KROME exits quickly L.)

NETTLETON. No trouble, dear old chap; none in the wide, wide, world. (JIMMY enters from R. with box of cigars, lifts feet high, goes to NETTLETON, who snatches the box from him as soon as he

comes in reach—opens it and holds it out to APPLE-GATE) Ah, here we are! Have a cigar, sir! (AP-LEGATE takes a cigar from the box and puts same in his mouth—NETTLETON does same then gives the box back to JIMMY, who exits R. still lifting his feet high to the amusement of SALLY. KROME enters from L. at this point—JOHNS takes the box of cigars from him)

JOHNS. Pardon me—(He snatches the cigar from the mouth of APPLEGATE and throws it on the floor, then holds his cigar box out to him—open. APPLEGATE struggles to hide his feelings and selects a cigar and puts it in his mouth—everyone gazes at JOHNS in astonishment—JOHNS then takes a cigar for himself—also a box of matches (that must be in the cigar box), these he puts in his left hand—then hands the cigar box back to KROME, who puts same on the desk L. and goes up to L. of the high stool by the high desk—TONY at the same time moving to R. of the high stool) I think you will find the flavor of these a trifle more agreeable. Tobacco is the one point on which Nettleton and I can never quite agree.

NETTLETON. (NETTLETON takes a match from the stand on desk C., lights it and puts it to APPLEGATE'S cigar. APPLEGATE rises at the same time JOHNS lights match and he pretends help light the cigar and burns NETTLETON—who springs back with a cry of pain) Ouch! (NETTLETON sticks his hand in his mouth to ease the pain—APPLEGATE fails to notice the incident and gets a light from JOHNS' match—JOHNS gloats over the trick, lights his own cigar)

APPLEGATE. Thank you; I was about to say, gentlemen, that my time is limited. Let's get down to business. (APPLEGATE sits L. of the desk C. JOHNS goes above the desk)

NETTLETON. (Delighted) Happy to serve you, Mr. Applegate. (Sits R. of the desk C.)

JOHNS. In any capacity. (*Sits above the desk c.*)

APPLEGATE. Good! It is a pleasure, I assure you, to transact business with two such enterprising young men. (*TONY and SALLY exchange looks—JOHNS and NETTLETON rise, bow to APPLEGATE very elaborately—then make faces at each other and sit*) Your harmony of method appeals especially to me—a newly married man. (*Leans back in his seat and beams on them*)

NETTLETON. (*Rising*) What!

JOHNS. (*Rising at the same time—Both NETTLETON and JOHNS extend their hands to APPLEGATE*) You? Congratulations!

(*APPLEGATE rises smilingly; NETTLETON steps forward and is about to grasp his hand when JOHNS leans over the desk and catches it and pulls APPLEGATE toward him—APPLEGATE does an undignified fall on top of the desk—recovers himself, smiles and shakes hands with JOHNS—NETTLETON takes a few steps R., turns and glares at JOHNS. All the other characters register.*)

NETTLETON. (*Strides forward and succeeds in getting APPLEGATE'S hand which he shakes warmly—glaring at JOHNS, who smiles*) To you and to the lady. I have a very charming wife myself.

JOHNS. And I am about to have one. (*He gets APPLEGATE'S hand again much to NETTLETON'S annoyance and shakes it*)

APPLEGATE. (*Beams*) Delightful! All three in the same connubial boat. (*The three sit—sigh and puff*) I'm interested in your remedy, through your very bright young salesman, Mr. Toler. (*Indicates TONY with a wave of the hand*)

TONY. (*Who has been waiting for a chance to*

butt in. With great spirit) Ah, thank you, sir. (*Advances rapidly, bringing chair from R. of the high desk with him and plants himself between* JOHNS *and* NETTLETON—*talks fast and waves his arms excitedly*) Now, gentlemen, if I may dip in my little paddle——

(JOHNS *waves him away*—NETTLETON *looks coldly at him.*)

NETTLETON. Not just now, Tony.

JOHNS. Don't come into the firm too soon.

(TONY's *face drops—he rises and walks up-stage, puts chair back where he got it, pantomimes his disgust to* SALLY.)

APPLEGATE. (*Briskly*) The Northwestern is going to carry your line of goods, give me a blank and I'll sign our first Spring order for—(*Pauses—everyone looks anxious*) well, say—fifty thousand gross. . . .

NETTLETON. (*Swallows*) Er—thank you, Mr. Applegate.

JOHNS. (*Swallowing*) Er—very much, indeed!

APPLEGATE. No! No thanks to me—the west is growing and it needs a good sound energetic pill. (*Emphasizes his remark with a sound slap on the desk, JOHNS coughs*)

NETTLETON. (*Springs to his feet*) Krome!

KROME. (*Alert*) Yes, sir.

JOHNS. (*Beating NETTLETON to it*) An order blank.

(KROME *goes to the desk D. L., and gets the order-book—TONY runs after him, takes it from him and tosses it on the desk in front of* JOHNS. *TONY and KROME then return to their places.*)

NETTLETON. (*Glaring at JOHNS and trying to speak in a pleasant voice for APPLGATE's benefit*) No, no T—let me.

JOHNS. (*Holding tightly to the book which TONY has thrown on the desk—rises*) Sit down and take the weight off your feet.

NETTLETON. Oh, just as you prefer, of course! (*He sits—T sits and begins to fill in the blank for APPLGATE to sign*)

APPLGATE. (*To NETTLETON*) No wonder you two have made such a great success.

NETTLETON. Thank you. (*Rises*) And while we are waiting, I'd like to show you what I have done to perfect this pill. The ingredients are mine. (*JOHNS hands the order blank to APPLGATE and tries to take his attention away from NETTLETON*) A marvelous combination of effective, though non-injurious drugs; and the answer is in our sales. (*Takes a step or two R.—and swells up*) Krome, give me the order book and report of our last fiscal year showing sales for the East and South.

JOHNS. (*Rises—goes down-stage to L. of APPLGATE*) And I'd like to call your attention to the color of these pills. My idea. (*NETTLETON goes above the desk c., slams chair down to try to take APPLGATE's attention away from JOHNS*) The coating is made from the best refined beat sugar, and this fashionable violet dye has defied the persecutions of the pure drug law.

JOHNS. (*NETTLETON takes up the seal on the desk c., bangs it. APPLGATE nods approval and examines the pills that JOHNS hands him*) The enormous sales, due almost exclusively to the outside of this pill—(*NETTLETON bangs a bottle of paste on the desk*)

NETTLETON. (*Interrupting—raises his voice over JOHNS*) Yes, yes, old fellow; but the selling quality is on the inside. (*KROME comes down from the*

high desk with ledger open at page which has been typed with the figures NETTLETON has to quote—NETTLETON taking the book and putting it on the desk) Here we are! Account of sales for year ending November 30, 1912; one hundred and forty-three thousand gross—(*Glancing triumphantly at APPLEGATE*) Counting fifty pills to the box——

JOHNS. Fifty-one!

(APPLEGATE *looks inquiringly at him and then back to NETTLETON.*)

NETTLETON. (*Looking fiercely at JOHNS, in a stern voice continues*) Counting fifty pills to the box—(*Looks down at the book to find his place*)

JOHNS. (*Taps APPLEGATE slyly on the shoulder, gets his attention, holds his hand at his side and sticks out one finger—speaks in a loud whisper*) Fifty-one!

(APPLEGATE *nods wisely.*)

NETTLETON. We have a total of ten hundred and twenty-nine millions six hundred and twenty thousand opportunities for a sound digestion—that I have offered to the South and East alone.

JOHNS. (*Sharply*) You have?

NETTLETON. (*Gives KROME the book—KROME takes it and puts it back in place and stands in former position*) Yes, I! Mr. Applegate is interested in the *ingredients* of my pill!

JOHNS. (*Coming to APPLEGATE's side*) And Mr. Applegate as a business man and a druggist knows perfectly well that the success of any patent medicine depends first on its advertising, (*Gives APPLEGATE a violent slap on the back to emphasize his remarks—APPLEGATE chokes*) and next on its pleasing taste or form. (*Gives APPLEGATE hard*

slap on the back—the pills APPLEGATE has been looking at fly in the air from the force of the slap—APPLEGATE chokes again)

NETTLETON. *(Comes to front of the desk c., stands just R. of APPLEGATE—yells at JOHNS)* Nothing of the sort and you know it! *(Slaps his hands at JOHNS and nearly hits APPLEGATE in the nose—APPLEGATE terrified at the proceedings, is leaning as far back in the chair as possible—with one hand (right) holding on to the corner of the desk to keep from falling—and dodging his head back as partners swing and slap hands in front of him)*

TONY. *(In great alarm, rushes down R.)* Mr. Johns! Mr. Nettleton!

NETTLETON. *(Waves TONY away—TONY goes to front of the stool by high desk)* Tony, you keep out of this!

APPLEGATE. Gentlemen, I didn't come here to—*(Starts to rise)*

JOHNS. *(In the heat of the argument has forgotten all else—gives APPLEGATE a push back in the chair—nearly knocking him over)* You keep out, too! The public doesn't give a hang for the inside of your pill—*(JOHNS is almost yelling—he is motioning at NETTLETON in front of APPLEGATE—and slaps his hands, and the ash from his (APPLEGATE'S) cigar, hits APPLEGATE in the face)*

NETTLETON. *(Coming back strong)* The public does! As shown by the approval of every reputable doctor. *(Slaps hands at JOHNS in front of APPLEGATE'S face. APPLEGATE dodges it nicely)*

JOHNS. Huh! What reputable doctor ever prescribed yours?

NETTLETON. Bah! Do doctors prescribe your purple coloring? *(NETTLETON brings his hand down on the desk near APPLEGATE'S hand, with all his might. APPLEGATE with a cry of pain jerks his*

hand away from the desk—NETTLETON, unconscious of what he has done, struts to R. and turns glaring at JOHNS. (The effect is found best—when the desk is hit instead of APPLGATE's hand)

JOHNS. (Yelling) They do! They are even giving X-ray violet baths! (JOHNS raises his foot high and brings it down with a bang just in front of APPLGATE's foot—then goes to R. edge of the desk C., puffs his cigar and glares at NETTLETON—APPLGATE, with shriek of pain and rage—springs to his feet and hops on one foot to KROME, who at this point has run down-stage L. and stands terrified—SALLY runs up R.)

APPLGATE. (Hanging on to his injured foot with both hands and standing as well as he can on one foot—to KROME in a voice of fury) What are they? Humorists—or just plain bugs.

NETTLETON. Johns, you are talking like a fool, (Goes to front of the desk C.) and if Mr. Applegate will come into my office—

(JOHNS goes above the desk C. TONY takes up his hat and stick.)

APPLGATE. (Makes frantic dive for his hat and gloves, goes up-stage with same—holding the order still in his right hand) No, Mr. Nettleton, I don't believe I'd care to.

JOHNS. (Takes up the box of pills from the desk C.—extends them towards APPLGATE) But, Mr. Applegate—

APPLGATE. (Checking him with a gesture) No, Mr. Johns, your sugar coating doesn't appeal to me, either. (Looks the partners up and down) What my firm wants is a pill that will give the human stomach a good, square, honest deal. But in this office—the cause of indigestion—seems rather stronger than the cure. Good-morning, gentlemen. (Starts off U. L.)

TONY. (*Desperately, in one last appeal*) But, Mister Applegate! (*Starts toward him—takes hat and cane*)

APPLEGATE. (*Throws order blank at TONY*) Take your pills yourself and go to the devil. (*Exit U. L.*)

TONY. (*Furious—goes to above the desk c., bangs it and shakes his fist at the partners*) Say, you two damn fools—you don't need a salesman—you want a wet nurse! (*Exit U. L.*)

(*KROME goes quickly to the high desk.*)

NETTLETON. (*Runs up to the gate U. L., calls after TONY*) Get out of here; you're fired!

TONY. (*Off-stage*) Fired, huh! Mr. Applegate!

(*NETTLETON and JOHNS walk around the desk c., glaring at each other, until JOHNS is L. of desk and NETTLETON R. of same.*)

NETTLETON and JOHNS. (*As they circle the desk*) Ah—Ah—Ah! (*Point fingers at each other*)

JOHNS. (*Sneeringly*) Now, you've done it! Lost the best salesman in America and killed the biggest order we nearly ever had. (*Smiles at his joke*)

NETTLETON. (*Beside himself with rage*) I didn't kill the order. You did it yourself when you tried to hog the credit of my pill!

JOHNS. (*In a voice of thunder*) It isn't so, he was my customer. I got him first and had him going.

NETTLETON. (*Throwing his hands in the air in helpless rage*) And now you've got him gone! (*Crosses to R.*)

JOHNS. And why? Because you butt in and queered the sale when I had the order *signed*!

NETTLETON. (*A very forced laugh*) Huh—Huh—Then I'm glad you lost it!

JOHNS. And you are perfectly willing to smash the business and choke the profits of the firm on account of your own piggish jealousy! (*Change of tone to one of self sympathy*) It isn't fair to me or my children!

NETTLETON. (*In contempt*) Your children! Why you fat head, you're not even married.

JOHNS. No, but I expect to be! *I'm looking to the future, (Pathetically)* and when I think of those poor little things, crying for food—starving on your account—it makes me wild! (*Few steps L.*)

NETTLETON. (*Striding towards him angrily*) See here, Mr. Brains and Blood, that's just about enough! Another remark or two like that and we'll make the matter *personal*.

JOHNS. (*Close to NETTLETON*) All right, Mr. Bone and Fat—I'm with you!

NETTLETON. *With me*—that's the trouble! As soon as my lawyer comes and I get rid of you, I'm going to sit down and laugh! (*Laughs loud and long. Goes to the door R. I*)

JOHNS. And when I get rid of you, I'm going to set off fire-works!

NETTLETON. Bah!

JOHNS. (*Crossing to door L. I*) Skyrockets!

NETTLETON. (*Each time a trifle louder*) Bah!

JOHNS. (*Louder*) Pin wheels!

NETTLETON. Bah!

JOHNS. (*Pointing at NETTLETON and shouting*) Devil chasers!

NETTLETON. (*Tops JOHNS*) Bah!

(NETTLETON and JOHNS exit R. and L., *slamming the doors as hard as possible.*)

SALLY. (*Rises*) Say, Charlie, if I want to keep *this* job, I'll have to lead a double life.

KROME. Here's Mr. Vanderholt now!

(KROME goes down to the office door L. I.)

VANDERHOLT. (*Enters quickly from U. L., comes to above the desk c.*) Good-morning, Krome, Good-morning, Miss Parker. (KROME and SALLY nod, VANDERHOLT puts his derby hat on the desk c.)

KROME. (*Nervously, in a loud whisper—points at the doors R. and L.*) Oh, Mr. Vanderholt—you're just in time.

VANDERHOLT. (*As he takes off gloves and smiles at the concern written on the faces of SALLY and KROME, speaks in brisk, business-like manner*) Well? What's the trouble, same old fight?

KROME. (*Earnestly*) Yes, sir; but this time it's to a finish.

VANDERHOLT. E'm—bad as *that*, eh?

KROME. It's worse! They want you to dissolve their partnership and let this fine, big money-making business go to smash.

SALLY. And we don't want to lose our positions.

VANDERHOLT. Don't worry about your positions, just have them out and we'll settle this thing for good and all. (*Tosses gloves in hat*)

KROME. (*Shakes head doubtfully*) But you won't, sir.

SALLY. Indeed you won't.

KROME. It's gone too far, you can't smooth it over *this* time, or if you do you've got to give them something with a punch behind it.

SALLY. Or a kick.

VANDERHOLT. All right, I will. Now get them out! (VANDERHOLT goes up to the high desk, puts his hat and gloves on same)

KROME and SALLY. (*Going quickly to the doors*)

R. and L.—*knocking hard, speak together*) Mr. Vanderholt is here, sir. (*KROME goes to the high desk—SALLY runs to the type desk and sits*)

VANDERHOLT. Thank you—both of you. Now leave the whole case to me! (*VANDERHOLT comes down L. to front of the desk c.*)

NETTLETON. (*Rushes on from R. to VANDERHOLT*) Hello, Van!

JOHNS. Hello, Van! (*Rushes on from L. to VANDERHOLT*)

VANDERHOLT. Hello, boys, how are you?

NETTLETON. (*Advancing and catching hold of VANDERHOLT and trying to pull him into the office R.*) I'm the one who sent for you!

JOHNS. (*Advancing and catching VANDERHOLT on the opposite side—tries to pull him to the office L.*) And so am I.

NETTLETON and JOHNS. (*Together both try to pull him to their office*) Come into my office, will you?

VANDERHOLT. (*Finally shaking them off after they have pulled him about a bit*) Hold on! Hold on! This is one of the times that I'll have to take you both together. (*Moves swiftly to above the desk c., speaks sharply to the partners*) Come on now—come on and sit down! (*Partners look at VANDERHOLT, then at each other and move slowly to the desk—NETTLETON to the chair R. of desk and JOHNS to chair L. of desk, keeping their eyes on each other, NETTLETON bumps into the desk and loses his balance. JOHNS laughs, NETTLETON recovers himself at once and glares around to see if any of the office force are laughing at him, NETTLETON catches hold of his chair R. of desk and bangs it down hard and sits, JOHNS slams his chair L. of the desk twice and sits down—crosses his right leg over his left with great care and deliberation, to NETTLETON's annoyance. At this point SALLY rises*

quickly and drops down R. a few feet and looks inquiringly at VANDERHOLT) Er—what is it, Miss Parker?

SALLY. Excuse me, but would you like me to go out for a while?

JOHNS. Yes, please.

NETTLETON. (*Quickly*) No—stay where you are. (*To VANDERHOLT*) I want her for my witness.

VANDERHOLT. (*As JOHNS rises*) Not a bad idea, T—we may need her. Take a seat, Miss Parker.

(*SALLY goes quickly to the type desk and sits.*)

JOHNS. (*Sits*) All right! If he has a witness, then I'll have a witness. (*Calling*) Kromie! Kromie!

KROME. (*Comes down L. of JOHNS*) Yes, sir?

JOHNS. Stay right where you are—I want you for my witness.

KROME. Yes, sir. (*KROME sits in chair—by the roll-top desk L.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Pounds the desk*) Well, boys, what's the row this time?

NETTLETON. (*Shakes finger at VANDERHOLT*) I want to dissolve this partnership—at once.

JOHNS. (*Sternly, to VANDERHOLT*) And no patching up this trip—I want it ripped wide open.

VANDERHOLT. (*Looking from one to the other in half pity*) What's the matter with you two? It's a shame you can't get on when you have every reason on earth to pull together.

NETTLETON. (*Looking at JOHNS—then straight in front of him, makes a face*) Huh!

JOHNS. (*Straight at NETTLETON*) Huh—huh!

VANDERHOLT. (*Dubious tone*) You mean to tell me you are going to let this valuable business go

to ruin simply because of your own pig-headedness? You ought to be kicked—the pair of you!

JOHNS. (*Threateningly, as he jumps to his feet*) Now, look here, Van——

VANDERHOLT. (*In a stern voice, eyes JOHNS steadily*) Hold on! I'm talking.

(JOHNS looks at VANDERHOLT a second, then sits.)

NETTLETON. (*Snickers, looks sideways at JOHNS*) Ha—ha——

VANDERHOLT. (*To NETTLETON*) Sh! (*NETTLETON becomes quiet at once, JOHNS grins*) You've been squabbling and fighting for years and trotting to me with your childish differences. I get it in *my* office, and in *your* office, and on the street, and everywhere I see you, till you've just about driven me crazy. I've fixed you up and started you off at least forty times, and the next day you blow up and are at it again. (*Change of tone—soft*) Now—I'm fond of you both—you know that.

JOHNS. (*Looks at VANDERHOLT, turns to front and mumbles under his breath, VANDERHOLT and NETTLETON look at JOHNS*) Um—Um—

VANDERHOLT. (*Pats NETTLETON on the shoulder*) Old George has been a sort of running mate of mine—

JOHNS. (*Laughs*) Old George is good.

(VANDERHOLT smiles, NETTLETON glares at JOHNS, SALLY and KROME smile stealthily.)

VANDERHOLT. (*Goes to JOHNS—rests hand on JOHN'S shoulder*) And as for T—we've both got the good taste to admire the same girl—(*As JOHNS turns and looks at him suspiciously*) But this is business and we'll cut the friendship out. If you choose to be sensible and settle this thing like

rational human beings, I'll help you all I can, but you've got to shake hands and make it a *final* settlement. (*Both partners look at VANDERHOLT and signify their respective intentions by, JOHNS sitting on his hands and NETTLETON stuffing his in his trousers pockets, VANDERHOLT looks at them in disgust*) Good Lord! Did either of you fellows ever play football?

NETTLETON. No!

JOHNS. Why?

VANDERHOLT. (*Banging the table with his fist*) Team work—that's the way to win out! Team work!

JOHNS. (*Laughing and pointing at NETTLETON*) With that mule? (*Laughs heartily*)

NETTLETON. (*Rises, shakes his fist at JOHNS*) Who are you calling a mule?

VANDERHOLT. (*Pushes the protesting NETTLETON in his chair*) Of course, if you won't pull together—then fight! Knife your own prospects, commit a cold-blooded, business suicide—and pay *me* for arranging the funeral decorations. (*JOHNS and NETTLETON glare at each other sullenly*) Do I understand that you are fully determined to dissolve this partnership?

JOHNS. (*With a wave of the hand*) I am.

NETTLETON. (*With great emphasis, slaps his knee*) Ab—so—lutely!

VANDERHOLT. (*Sharply*) All right—we'll do it. Question is *how* will we do it?

JOHNS and NETTLETON. (*Snapping at him*) That's what we are paying *you* for.

VANDERHOLT. (*Clasping one hand to his forehead, raises eyes upward*) And God knows I'm earning my fee. (*Change of tone*) Now then—the simplest and most amicable process is for one of you to buy the other out.

NETTLETON. Now you're *talking*.

JOHNS. For the first time since you started.

VANDERHOLT. *Good!* I'm glad you agree on *something!* Next question—Which of you will sell; how about you, George?

NETTLETON. (*Makes terrible face, puts hand on his chest—in a shrill voice to VANDERHOLT*) Me sell out—(*Waves his hand depreciatively at JOHNS*) to *him?* And how long do you think this business would last with that wall-eyed pike at the head of it?

JOHNS. (*Jumping up*) Now, see here, George Nettleton—

(NETTLETON rises.)

VANDERHOLT. (*Motioning both to sit*) Here! Here! Sit down, both of you. I'll referee this battle. (*NETTLETON and JOHNS glare at each other and sit*)

Mr. Nettleton refuses to sell—how about you, T?

JOHNS. (*Looks at VANDERHOLT in astonishment, points at NETTLETON*) Who—me? Sell out the results of *my brains*—to that *onion?* (*Doubles up with laughter*)

NETTLETON. (*Rises savagely*) Who's an onion? Why you—

VANDERHOLT. (*Pushes NETTLETON in his chair*) All right. I construe that as another refusal. Now since a simple bill of sale is out of the question, we'll turn to the *next amicable* process. (*Sits above the desk c. in the swivel chair*) You two will *divide* the business, each taking an equal share of the live customers, stock of pills on hand and good will of the company. (*As NETTLETON and JOHNS nod their heads*) You can then be rivals and cut each other's throats at your own pleasure and convenience!

NETTLETON. (*Slapping his hands—laughs glee-*

fully) Fine! I like that!

JOHNS. (*Holding his sides with mirth*) So do I. It's great!

VANDERHOLT. Ah! Now we are *getting* somewhere. Next question: which of you is to retain the name of the present concern?

NETTLETON. (*Quickly*) Naturally, I will.

JOHNS. (*Jumps to his feet and faces NETTLETON*) What! And get the advantage of all our advertising—not much you don't.

NETTLETON. (*Rises*) Why not? Didn't I originate the business—and build it up to what it is?

JOHNS. (*Laughs scornfully*) You built it up—Ha—ha—started it, yes—such a business as it was. All you had was a pill that you couldn't sell.

NETTLETON. (*Furious*) And just because you came along with a measley five hundred dollars and a hideous purple sugar coating, you think you've done it all!

JOHNS. I have!

NETTLETON. You haven't—and I'll prove it! (*Triumphantly*) I am the man that *made* the pill! (*Crosses feet*)

JOHNS. And I am the man that made the public swallow them! (*Imitates NETTLETON*)

(SALLY begins to laugh, tries to check it by stuffing handkerchief in her mouth. All look at her. SALLY bends over with laughter, NETTLETON goes over to her, when she raises up she discovers him regarding her severely and the laughter dies in a gasp.)

NETTLETON. (*In stern tone*) Miss Parker, leave the room.

JOHNS. Miss Parker, do nothing of the kind. (SALLY starts out of her seat and drops into it again)

VANDERHOLT. Will you two sit down and keep quiet?

JOHNS. (*Excitedly*) No, I won't sit down.

NETTLETON. (*Few steps to R.—then to R. of the desk c.*) And I won't! I want you to put that maniac out of my office!

JOHNS. And I want you to get that baboon out of mine!

NETTLETON. (*Striding to R., hands to head*) A-h-h-h-h-h!

VANDERHOLT. (*Rises*) Oh, stop it, will you! Stop it! (*Goes to KROME who moves a few steps L. at this point*)

KROME. (*In a frightened whisper*) You see, it's no use, sir, you'd better give up!

(JOHNS goes down L.)

VANDERHOLT. Leave it to me!

(KROME goes back to the high desk shaking head.)

NETTLETON. (*Comes to front of the desk c., points angrily at JOHNS*) I'd give anything on earth I own to have that man in the only place he's fit for—or ever will be—a valet—to lay out my pajamas!

JOHNS. (*Comes in front of the desk c., shakes finger at NETTLETON*) And I'd like to have you as a servant—to black my shoes! (*Walks L. as far as door*)

NETTLETON. I'm much more likely to black your eyes! (*Follows*)

JOHNS. (*Advancing a step*) Try it! and I'll lay you out—instead of your pajamas!

VANDERHOLT. (*Steps between them as they start for each other*) Will you two infernal idiots shut up?

NETTLERON. Van, you keep out of this!

JOHNS. That's right, keep out!

(Partners give VANDERHOLT a shove and send him up-stage.)

VANDERHOLT. *(Comes back quickly and shoves them apart)* No, I won't keep out! You two are here to settle a business proposition and all you can do is to throw a baby bluff.

JOHNS. Who, me?

VANDERHOLT. No. Both of you. *(Both partners look at him)* All this rot about valets and servants and blacking boots until you make me sick.

JOHNS. Then why don't you settle it.

VANDERHOLT. I would if you two were sports enough to put it through.

JOHNS. I'm sport enough to put through anything.

NETTLETON. So would I.

VANDERHOLT. You would? Then come over here and sit down. *(Goes swiftly to above the desk c.)* Come on! Come on! *(Both come slowly to their chairs, NETTLETON R. of the desk and JOHNS L., after they sit)* Now then, you won't have law or reason or common sense, so I'll give you something you can understand. I'll deal you each a hand of poker—cold—the man who wins will run this business for a year; the man who loses will be the other's servant for a year. Now!

(They both stare mutely at VANDERHOLT for a moment.)

NETTLETON. What are you trying to do—kid us?

JOHNS. You're a hell of a lawyer!

VANDERHOLT. Granted; but you've handed me a hell of a proposition; and even when I give you a

sporting chance, you turn it down because neither of you has the grit to stand the guff.

NETTLETON. If you mean that for me, I have as much grit as you have any day!

JOHNS. And I have more than both of you!

NETTLETON. You? Ha, ha! You poor moon face, you wouldn't bark at a sick canary.

JOHNS. (*Faces NETTLETON*) Wouldn't, eh? How about *you*? When Van made his fool proposal, you were so afraid I'd take him up, I thought you'd faint!

NETTLETON. And if I *had* you'd have died standing up!

JOHNS. Would I? Well, I'll bet you a thousand you'd be the first to crawl!

NETTLETON. Prove it!

JOHNS. I will! I'm game for Van's little hand of poker, just for the satisfaction of seeing you duck. Get me?

NETTLETON. (*Waving him aside*) Aw, bluff—bluff——

JOHNS. Then call it! If I'm bluffing, call my bluff! (*Rises*)

NETTLETON. (*Desperately. Rises*) All right I will.

VANDERHOLT. (*Quickly*) You're on, both of you. Miss Parker, get your book! We'll put this down in contract form and have no come back. (*As NETTLETON and JOHNS turn to him in protest*) Now then! Who's to be the quitter, (*Looks from one to the other. Both start to speak to VANDERHOLT*) Speak up! Don't mind me! Speak up! (*NETTLETON and JOHNS each wait for the other to sit, NETTLETON starts to sit and as he is very nearly in his chair, JOHNS starts to sit. NETTLETON sees him out of the corner and quickly rises, and JOHNS by a great effort catches himself at the last minute and stands erect.*

They glare at each other and sit) Ready, Miss Parker?

SALLY. (*Quickly takes her stenographic book from the type desk where she is sitting, and takes her pencil from her hair and nods to VANDERHOLT*) Yes, sir!

VANDERHOLT. (*Sternly, to NETTLETON*) And don't you interrupt me! (*JOHNS snickers—VANDERHOLT goes to SALLY*) This agreement, made and entered into this blank day of November, (*Walks up and down stage R., hands behind back—then hand to forehead and etc.*) 1915, by and between George B. Nettleton, party of the first part and T Boggs Johns, party of the second part——

JOHNS. (*Rises quickly—slaps desk*) Hold on there, I decline positively to be known as the party of the second part! (*Sits*)

NETTLETON. There you are, always the way with that pin-headed captain of industry, blocks everything.

VANDERHOLT. (*Coming to the side of NETTLETON*) Thanks, George. I'll make you party of the second part. (*Turns to SALLY when NETTLETON's voice stops him*)

NETTLETON. (*Jumps to his feet*) No, I'm hanged if you will. I wouldn't give him that much satisfaction.

(JOHNS laughs.)

VANDERHOLT. (*Runs hands through hair*) Waugh! Miss Parker, strike that out! This agreement, made and entered into this blank day of November, 1915, by and between the parties who have hereto set their hands and seals. (*Partners and VANDERHOLT exchange bows*) Witnesseth! Paragraph. Whereas, the parties hereto have found it impossible to continue as business partners, they

hereby agree and do agree as follows: Paragraph. To play one hand of show-down in a game which for future legal reference may be known as poker. (*Pacing up and down as he dictates*) And the loser in said game, for the term of one year from the date hereof, shall become the household servant of the winner in said game. (NETTLETON *wipes his face and neck with handkerchief*, JOHNS *grins*) The winner hereinafter to be known as the master; and the loser hereinafter to be known as the man, subject to the following conditions, to wit—(*Looks at boys*) All right, boys?

JOHNS. (*Laughs*) Fine!

NETTLETON. (*Pauses, swallows, speaks in a cracked high voice*) Splendid. (*Mops face with handkerchief*—JOHNS *grins*)

VANDERHOLT. Good! Clause one. (*Moves to side of SALLY*) And the master shall have full and absolute control of all matters pertaining to the Eureka Digestive Pill Company, without stay, let, hindrance, or process of injunction on the part of the man. (*As JOHNS and NETTLETON both rise in protest*, VANDERHOLT *holds out his hands to quiet them*) But (*Goes to above the desk c.*) the master shall credit the man's account—with all income, commissions, or other moneys rightfully his—(NETTLETON *and* JOHNS *sit*) and shall hold same, subject to deductions for bad behavior.

NETTLETON. (*Timidly*) Say, Van—what *kind* of bad behavior?

VANDERHOLT. I'm coming to that. Clause two: (*Goes to SALLY*) And the man shall immediately enter the service of the master, as his servant, valet, or in such other capacity as may seem good and agreeable to the said master's wishes or desires. (JOHNS *grins*. NETTLETON *looks troubled*) And furthermore, (*Moves down R. and back*) the man shall serve the master with energy, diligence, re-

spect and in all other acts of strict obedience, as are generally accepted with the duties of a menial. (*As JOHNS begins to laugh heartily, VANDERHOLT goes to above the desk c.*) What's the matter T?

JOHNS. (*Laughing, turns in chair—faces VANDERHOLT*) I can't help it, Van. I can't help it. You know, I'm to be married in June, and was just thinking how great it would be to start in house-keeping with Nettleton as our butler. (*Laughs more heartily*) Anything we want done—(*Indicates NETTLETON with a wave of the hand*) we'll let George do it! (*Leans back and laughs heartily, NETTLETON, with an angry cry rises and snatches up the notary's seal on the desk and raises it to strike* JOHNS. VANDERHOLT stops him, has slight struggle with him for it and takes it away from him. VANDERHOLT steps just L. of NETTLETON)

VANDERHOLT. Here, you! No assault and battery! Hand over that weapon, George. (*As he gets the seal away from NETTLETON, holds it up for inspection*) Where do you think you are, at your club? (*Puts the seal on top of the letter file R., and goes to SALLY*) Last line, Miss Parker—

SALLY. (*Consulting notes*) In all other acts of strict obedience as are generally accepted with the duties of a menial.

VANDERHOLT. (*Walking up and down R.*) But—for each and every violation of such acts, the master may charge the man's account in the sum of one hundred dollars forfeit.

(NETTLETON mops his neck with his handkerchief.)

JOHNS. (*Interrupting*) Poor old George! (*Chuckles, NETTLETON looks fiercely at JOHNS*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Glances reprovingly at JOHNS*) It is understood and agreed, however, that the master shall pay the man, in addition to his board and

lodging, the sum of twenty dollars per month, in wages.

NETTLETON. (*Timidly, and with a slight break in his voice*) Say, Van—isn't that rather small?

(VANDERHOLT comes to NETTLETON's side.)

JOHNS. (*Scratching his ear daintily with one finger, speaks in a patronizing tone*) Oh, all right, I'll make it thirty.

(NETTLETON, with great difficulty restrains himself from jumping at JOHNS.)

VANDERHOLT. Change it to thirty. (*Saunters up to the letter file, rests arms on same*) Clause three: The one other party to whom the conditions of this agreement may be known, is Mrs. George B. Nettleton.

(NETTLETON sighs with relief.)

JOHNS. (*Rising quickly*) And where does Mrs. Nettleton come in?

VANDERHOLT. (*Going above the desk c.*) In either case, she's got to know; whether George is your servant, or you his—what's the matter with you?

JOHNS. Oh! (*Firmly*) Then you've got to put in another clause to hold him down.

VANDERHOLT. (*Impatiently*) I'm going to. (*Waves hands at JOHNS to sit, JOHNS does so. VANDERHOLT goes to SALLY*) It is understood and agreed, however, that should either of the parties hereto, or the wife of one of the parties hereto, (*JOHNS nods to VANDERHOLT*) make known the nature of this agreement to any other person, the offending party shall pay over to the aggrieved

party—the sum of five thousand dollars cash.

NETTLETON. (*Rising*) No, that isn't fair. That makes me responsible for ten thousand to his five.

JOHNS Not unless you and your wife *both* tell. What's the matter with you? (*Taps his head gently with his closed fist*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Pushing NETTLETON back in his chair*) That's right, George. Keep quiet. Clause Four: (*Starts to walk up and down R. stage. Must be at the high desk before clause five*) This agreement may at any time be annulled and cancelled, but only by mutual consent. *And*—should either party fail to faithfully fulfil the covenants herein contained, then such party shall forfeit to the other party—all his stock and other interests in the Eureka Digestive Pill Company. (*JOHNS whistles softly and NETTLETON mops his brow with his handkerchief*) Clause five: Mr. Thomas J. Vanderholt (*VANDERHOLT draws himself up to full height, expands his chest, and with great dignity walks down R. as far as the apron*) is hereby appointed as referee; with power to decide all questions of dispute; and shall charge therefor (*Speaks with great relish as the partners stare at him indignantly*) such fee or fees as may, in his judgment, seem just and lawful. (*Turns up-stage, adjusts his cuffs, walks up-stage to the type desk and turns to the partners, who turn in their seats following him with their eyes*)

JOHNS. (*With a wave of the hand*) General Villa!

VANDERHOLT. (*To above the desk c.*) That's all. Three copies, please, and if you or Krome ever mention this agreement to any one, you'll lose your jobs. (*SALLY turns to type desk, takes up blank sheets of paper and carbons*) Are you both entirely satisfied?

(*SALLY puts the papers and carbons in the typewriter.*)

JOHNS. I am.

VANDERHOLT. And agree to sign it—before witnesses and under oath?

JOHNS. Sure. (*Pointing at NETTLETON who sits dejectedly*) But look at him!

VANDERHOLT. Well, George—how about it?

NETTLETON. (*Rises, crosses to R.*) I—I won't do it—I'm married!

JOHNS. (*Laughing*) Now, isn't that the limit. He's married! (*Laughs*) Who's playing this game of poker, you or she?

NETTLETON. (*Back to R. of desk c.*) It isn't a square deal! Oh, not on my account, but I've got to consider Mrs. Nettleton!

JOHNS. Oh, somebody warm his milk and give him a little kiss!

NETTLETON. (*Angrily, shakes fist at JOHNS*) Cut that, will you? (*To VANDERHOLT appealingly*) Why, think of *her* position, Van. If I lost and had to be a servant to—that! (*Makes a face at the prospect*)

JOHNS. (*Sweetly*) Now don't you worry, Georgie dear, I have a large nature and am perfectly willing to take on Mrs. Nettleton as our parlor maid.

NETTLETON. (*Furiously, as he starts forward*) You! How dare you mention my wife's name.

VANDERHOLT. (*Pushing NETTLETON back in his seat and motioning JOHNS to keep quiet as he starts to reply and go for NETTLETON. SALLY and KROME register*) Here, you—here! No rough house, or I'll whip the pair of you! (*Bangs the desk and looks first at NETTLETON then JOHNS*)

JOHNS. (*Indicating VANDERHOLT*) The Kaiser!

VANDERHOLT. Then you have my ultimatum, take it or leave it. (*Bangs the desk*)

JOHNS. (*Laughing*) Oh, he'll leave it all right, all right. I knew he'd crawl; but I didn't think he'd

duck behind a petticoat.

NETTLETON. (*Shouting*) That's a lie! And I'll show you. (*Rises*) Here! Who's got a pack of cards!

KROME. (*Jumping to his feet*) I have! (*Takes a pack from his hip pocket and advances to upper L. end of the desk c.*)

NETTLETON. (*In spite of himself*) Oh! (*Flops in chair R. of the desk c., leans head on hand*)

KROME. I play solitaire with 'em on the New Rochelle express,

(*SALLY takes the pills from the R. side of the desk c. and papers, and puts them on the high desk and returns, stands just back of NETTLETON'S chair.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Taking the cards and shuffling*) Thanks! We'll deal quick, or they'll both quit! (*Smiles at JOHNS and NETTLETON*) Come on and take your medicine. (*As the partners scowl at each other*) Here, Krome; you are honest and impartial. Cut!

KROME. (*Cuts the cards and takes the fixed pack from behind the basket at the L. side of the desk—upper end—and puts the pack he receives from VANDERHOLT out of sight*) Yes, sir—(*VANDERHOLT takes the cards from him*)

NETTLETON. (*Nervously*) Well, well! What are you waiting for? Deal 'em—hurry up!

JOHNS. (*Laughing*) Ha, ha! Getting nervous; got him beat at the start.

VANDERHOLT. All right, boys; here goes! (*Starts to deal to JOHNS, then turns to NETTLETON*) Senior partner first! (*Starts to deal five cards to each man alternately, beginning with NETTLETON.*) KROME puts his foot on JOHNS' chair)

JOHNS. (*JOHNS examining his cards carefully,*

sees KROME looking over his shoulder, slaps his leg knocking his foot off the chair) Get your foot off my chair!

VANDERHOLT. (*Looking at NETTLETON, who is squeezing his cards together and going over them again and again*) Well, George? Don't rub off the spots—you can't make an ace out of a tray, come on, how many cards?

NETTLETON. (*Swallowing hard*) Three! (*Discards*)

VANDERHOLT. All right—put down your pair or whatever it is.

NETTLETON. (*Holding two cards close to his breast and looking at JOHNS*) What are you? Standing pat?

JOHNS. (*Laughs*) No, I'm sitting bull. Never mind what I am, put down your hand. (*JOHNS discards four*)

KROME. (*As NETTLETON lays cards on the desk*) A pair of sixes!

(*JOHNS laughs and NETTLETON sinks in his chair.*)

VANDREHOLT. Well, T, what have you?

JOHNS. (*Holding up one card*) I'm holding one card—my lucky queen of hearts, and three more ladies in the pack! Deal.

VANDERHOLT. Hold on—George first.

KROME. (*Calling out denomination of cards as VANDERHOLT deals them out, one at a time, face up*) Nine—three—eight!

VANDERHOLT. Still a pair of sixes.

JOHNS. (*Laughs exultantly*) Oh, what a cinch to beat! Here, gimme four! Just flip 'em out, old pal, I'm going to eat that butler up!

VANDERHOLT. Look out, T, the game's young yet! (*Deals one at a time, as before.* NETTLETON has truned in his chair slightly to R., away from

the game, taking it for granted that he has lost, his face takes on an expression of abject despair)

KROME. (*As VANDERHOLT deals to JOHNS*)
King——

JOHNS. (*Excitedly*) Of hearts. Come on, you king or queen, come on! (*JOHNS picks up each card dealt him with his right hand and puts it with the others in his left, which he holds up*)

KROME. (*As VANDERHOLT throws the card on desk*) Jack——

JOHNS. (*Raising his voice a bit each time*) Of hearts! Come on you Jack or Queen, come on!

KROME. (*As VANDERHOLT continues to deal*)
Ace!

JOHNS. (*Rising in his excitement*) Of hearts! Come on you little straight or flush—come on!

KROME. (*As the last card is dealt*) Four!

SALLY. (*Greatly excited*) Of spades!

(*JOHNS gazes at the card, hardly able to believe his eyes, then with an inarticulate moan sinks slowly into his chair and stares glassily in front of him. Holds the last card over the ledge of the desk so that the house may see.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*To JOHNS*) Nothing! (*KROME and SALLY register, VANDERHOLT turns to NETTLETON, puts out his hand*) Good boy, George! (*NETTLETON, with a woeful countenance, gazes into space as he gradually comes back to earth; he looks down at VANDERHOLT'S hand, his eye goes up to VANDERHOLT'S shoulder then back to the hand. Suddenly he realizes his victory. Straightens up in his seat, clenches his fists and proclaims it in a shrill, cracked voice*) My God! I win! (*NETTLETON rises slowly, a smile begins to overspread his features. He adjusts his coat and with an exaggerated dignity of manner and tone, addresses JOHNS*)

Boggs, attend me! (JOHNS raises his head and looks at NETTLETON, beaten) As my butler, the first little service I shall require of you—is to grow side whiskers!

(NETTLETON struts to R., laughing.)

CURTAIN.

(Ring on the word "grow." Company calls only.)

(JIMMY, KROME, SALLY, NETTLETON, MRS. NETTLETON, VANDERHOLT, FLORENCE, JOHNS, TONY, APPLEGATE.)

ACT II.

SCENE:—JOHNS enters in the costume of a butler, wearing dark side whiskers. Looks sad and depressed. He carries a waiter on which is a decanter, syphon of vichy and high ball glasses. Enters from L. 1—places the waiter on the table L., then crosses to the library R. 1. As JOHNS passes C. going to the library, CODDLES, the English maid servant, appears on the stairs, comes down stairs to the first landing, hides until JOHNS returns. JOHNS exits into the library L. 1, gets NETTLETON's smoking jacket and slippers and re-enters. Throws the jacket roughly over the small armchair R. and then goes to the fireplace L. and dashes the slippers down; thinks better of it, picks them up gently and places them before the fire to warm. Goes to front of the table L., sits on the small settee, puts hand to head, sighs. CODDLES looks at him admiringly.

CODDLES. (Whistles coyly) S-s-s-sh! Mr. Boggs, sir!

JOHNS. (*Straightens with a start, looks at CODDLES, speaks irritably*) Well, Coddles, what do you want?

CODDLES. (*Comes towards JOHNS*) Ho, come now, don't be cross. Hi thought wilst h'everthink was quiet like, h'id rum h'in an' 'elp you with your work. (*Grins at JOHNS*)

JOHNS. (*Waves at her*) Keep away, will you? Keep away!

CODDLES. (*Steps towards him, leans on her broom*) Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Hi didn't mean no 'arm, sir. But this 'ere hain't no man's work, hany 'ow. I don't see why the marster makes ye do it.

JOHNS. *I do.* (*Taking up dust cloth*) The precise removal of microscopic specks of dust from his personal possessions—is the chief component part of a butler's destiny.

CODDLES. (*Blankly*) Yes, sir. I don't know what you mean, sir, but hit's very likely. (*Laughs—presses her hands to her bosom, looking at him in lovesick adoration—goes to him, grins at him*)

JOHNS. Here—stop grinning at me in that way! (*As she changes her expression and backs away and puts one foot up on the broom*) What are you doing sweeping at this time of the afternoon?

CODDLES. (*Grinning*) We's expectin' guests—for dinner, sir.

JOHNS. (*In alarm, jumps to his feet, goes few steps to c.* CODDLES comes down off the broom, retreats a step or so) Guests? For dinner? *Who?*

CODDLES. (*Trembling with fear*) Hi don't know, sir. The marster 'e just telephoned an' told me to tidy hup the spare room.

JOHNS. (*Grimly; sits on the settee*) Guests! And a million to one they know me! (*Mops forehead with the dust cloth*)

CODDLES. (*Advancing to him; leans her broom*

against the table and kneels on the R. side of the settee) Now, don't you worrit, sir, about the hextra work. Hi'll 'ave the dishes 'ot an' ready for you to serve 'em. (*As JOHNS turns his head away*) Oh, Mr. Boggs, sir, Hi don't believe you's 'appy.

JOHNS. No? Why not?

CODDLES. Men folks can 'ide their feelin's in the day time, Mr. Boggs; but not hat night. (*As JOHNS looks up at her*) W'y, sir, I can 'ear you through the transom, a-moanin' an' a-cursin' in your sleep. (*Leans forward tenderly*) Mr. Boggs, sir—was you hever a married man?

JOHNS. (*Grimly*) Yes! Three times!

CODDLES. Was you now? W'y dearie me! (*Sits by JOHNS on the settee*)

JOHNS. (*Jumps up as though he had been shot; moves a step L.*) But I'll tell you one thing, Coddles—that *three* is just about my limit. Understand?

CODDLES. Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. (*Grins*) But of course we halways 'as the privilege of changing of our minds. (*CODDLES rises, goes to JOHNS, who crosses quickly to front of the table R. CODDLES plays with her apron, wiggles her foot in front of her dress, and looks coyly at the uncomfortable JOHNS*) Mr. Boggs, sir—did you hever think of the difference 'tween you and me?

JOHNS. Eh? No, I didn't! How do you mean?

CODDLES. In this 'ere 'ouse'old, you was hengaged because you's so 'andsome—(*JOHNS swells up a bit*) But Hi was hengaged—because Hi'm 'omely!

JOHNS. What makes you think so? (*Looks at her and turns away and makes a face*)

CODDLES. Of course nobody hain't never told me, plump outright, but hany one with 'arf an heye can see't as the missus 'as a jealous disposition, han' she ain't a-goin' to 'ave no good lookin' 'uzzies a-'angin' aroun' to attract 'er 'usband.

JOHNS. Well, that's good logic maybe, but where do I come in?

CODDLES. Ho, with you hit's different. A 'and-some butler is an hornament.

JOHNS. Mm! That's what the *master* says I am. (CODDLES moves close to JOHNS, tries to clasp his hand. JOHNS pulls his hand away with a gasp and moves to chair R. of the table R. and sits)

CODDLES. (Clasping hands and speaking pathetically) Yes, sir. An' sometimes you looks mournful and that sad you puts me in mind of a piece of music.

JOHNS. Yes; ragtime! (Throws the dust cloth on table)

CODDLES. (Catches the cloth up quickly, kisses it, and presses it to her heart; puts it in dress front—speaks lovingly) An' w'en you is un'appy, it's because you's lonesome—(Coming behind him) An' hif you would honly let me rub your head, sir—an' 'old your 'and—(Attempts to do both)

JOHNS. (Jumps up; runs up-stage R.) Coddles, you are sick! You need a doctor; you—

CODDLES. (Following him) No, no, sir, 'deed Hi don't. Hit hain't the stummick, Mr. Boggs, sir, hit's the 'eart!

JOHNS. (Gets on small chair U. R.) Stop it, will you? Keep away! Why, woman, you are raving crazy. You—(As NETTLETON passes the window U. C.) Look out—look out! Here comes Mr. Nettleton!

CODDLES. Ho, Lud, hit's 'im! (Runs and gets broom, then goes quickly to the door L. 1, opens slightly, and turns to JOHNS) Mr. Boggs, sir—hif you 'appens to change your mind, sir, Hi's in the kitchen! (Grins at him and exits)

(JOHNS comes down off the chair, goes U. C. by the staircase, stands at attention.)

NETTLETON. (*Enters from U. R., advances slowly and with much dignity to the table L. He carries two packages, one long and thin and cone shaped, the other small and flat tied with a purple ribbon. Places them on table. NETTLETON carries a cane. Speaks haughtily to JOHNS*) Boggs! My hat! (*Hands the hat to JOHNS, who snatches it away. NETTLETON pretends not to notice*) My stick. (*JOHNS takes the stick, makes a motion behind NETTLETON as if to strike. NETTLETON turns slightly and JOHNS covers it by pretending to scratch his head*) It is part of your duty to anticipate my wishes, without my being forced to continually call your attention to such trifling details. It is most annoying—most annoying. (*Goes a few steps L., then turns to JOHNS*) Why don't you answer me? (*Throws his gloves in the hat which JOHNS is holding*)

JOHNS. Yes, sir.

NETTLETON. (*NETTLETON puts coat on the table L. JOHNS puts hat and stick in the window seat U. R., then gets NETTLETON's jacket*) Then please, remember it, and get my smoking jacket. (*JOHNS brings the jacket to NETTLETON, who stands in front of the settee L., turned slightly to L. JOHNS stops behind NETTLETON, about three feet, and holds out the jacket. NETTLETON, without turning, motions him to come nearer. JOHNS does so, then holding the jacket too low. NETTLETON motions him to lift it. JOHNS does so and helps him on with the jacket. When it is on, he gives NETTLETON a shove sending him a few feet down L. NETTLETON turns quickly to find JOHNS with his hands folded, looking front, with the most innocent expression on his face*) Boggs! You have missed your vocation; you should have hired yourself out to a piano mover. (*NETTLETON sits on the settee and takes the evening paper from the table: reads it*)

JOHNS. (*Looks at NETTLETON; then front*) I did!

NETTLETON. (*Looks at him, then back to paper*) Now, Boggs, we'll have our slippers. (*Humms. JOHNS takes them from the fireplace, makes motion as if to throw them at him; then kneels by NETTLETON R. of him and unbuttons shoes, right one. First takes off right shoe, puts on the right slipper, then starts to take off the left shoe—is slow about it*) Well! Are you going to take all night? Why don't you pull it off? (*As JOHNS jerks it off, NETTLETON grabs his foot*) Ouch! What the devil are you doing?

JOHNS. You told me to pull it off, didn't you?

NETTLETON. I didn't tell you to pull off my bunyon with it, did I? Get me a highball. And be quick about it! (*As NETTLETON returns to his paper*)

JOHNS. Yes, sir. (*JOHNS goes up to the tray as slowly as possible, selects a highball glass, carefully pours the whiskey until the glass is full, then takes the vichy and squirts in a drop. Looks at NETTLETON. Then drinks the glassful: leaves just a drop; holds up the glass to see how much is left; takes another sip; holds up the glass again, examines it; then fills it with vichy, and goes to NETTLETON and hands it to him*)

NETTLETON. (*Taking the glass without looking up from his paper*) Thank you, Boggs! (*Starts to drink. Raises the glass, looks at it, eyes BOGGS, who is standing at attention, with an innocent expression on his face*) Boggs! You ought to be able to mix a good highball.

JOHNS. (*Respectfully*) I believe I have it in me, sir.

NETTLETON. (*Glances at JOHNS suspiciously, then fills the glass with whiskey*) And where is Mrs. Nettleton? (*Drinks and places the glass on tray*)

JOHNS. Been out all afternoon calling. (*Picks up NETTLETON's shoes*)

NETTLETON. (*Leans back*) A-h-h-h-h! I tell you, Boggs, it's great to have a comfortable cozy home to come to after office hours. But then, as a successful business man, I believe that I deserve it.

JOHNS. (*Timidly*) I say, George——

NETTLETON. (*Looks up sharply*) Eh?

JOHNS. (*Apologetically*) I mean, Mr. Nettleton.

NETTLETON. That's better.

JOHNS. Eh—how *is* business?

NETTLETON. (*With relish*) Great! (*Enthusiastically*) Why, you'd hardly believe it, but since you left, I've just about *doubled* the business. It shows what system and intelligence can do. No disturbance—no noise—except the orders coming in. For the first time in years I feel that I can do something. (*JOHNS walks a few steps to c., turns away from NETTLETON*) Oh! That reminds me. I've decided to change the color of our pills.

JOHNS. (*Turns and takes a step to NETTLETON*) What? You are going to change the color of my pills. (*Pleads*) Why, George, you don't mean that! You *can't*!

NETTLETON. (*Smiles—enjoying the situation*) Haven't I the right, according to the contract? The master will have for the term of one year full and absolute control of all matters pertaining to the business. (*Smiles at JOHNS' discomfiture*) That's clear enough, isn't it?

JOHNS. (*Pathetically*) Yes, I know. But to change the *color* of my pills. (*JOHNS wilts into the chair L. of the table R.*) Why, George—it's like the *murder*—of my only child. (*Puts right elbow on table and leans his head against shoes which he holds in his hand*)

NETTLETON. Boggs! Don't you think it about time to stop *worrying* over your *descendants*. That violet was a hideous color, anyhow. I've decided to change it to a polka dot.

JOHNS. (*Crosses to settee*) A polka dotted pill? For the lord's sake, George——

NETTLETON. (*Checking him*) No argument. I've proved it. The minute I advertised the change the business jumped.

JOHNS. *Jumped!* (*Goes a few steps R., speaks gloomily*) It's a wonder it didn't scream!

NETTLETON. (*Rising*) Oh, Boggs! I forgot to tell you—I'm expecting dinner guests this evening.

JOHNS. (*Fiercely*) Who are they?

NETTLETON. (*In assumed surprise*) What?

JOHNS. (*Advancing—speaks in a loud threatening tone*) I said—who are they? (*Flings NETTLETON'S shoes on the floor*)

NETTLETON. (*Goes a few steps L.*) Boggs, you mortify me! Please remember your position—and the contract.

JOHNS. (*Follows him*) I do remember them—both! But there's nothing in that contract that gives you the right to put me on exhibition—for the benefit of my former friends.

NETTLETON. (*Laughs lightly, master of the situation*) There's nothing in it to the contrary. (*As JOHNS turns away, his hand to his head*) Must I consult the butler as to who are to be my dinner guests? Besides, you'll be disguised—by your—er—side whiskers. Of course they aren't very becoming to you, Boggs; but they answer their purpose—admirably. (*As JOHNS raises his fist*) Remember the contract! (*JOHNS reconsiders, bell rings off stage*) And answer that bell.

JOHNS. All right! (*Goes up a few steps, turns and comes back*) But I want to say to you and

Van, that contract is just about the most *one-sided* contract that was ever written. (*Up a few steps and back again—louder tone*) And another thing—I want—my—mail!

NETTLETON. (*Loftily*) Your mail?

JOHNS. (*Beside himself with rage*) My private letters—that come to the office! And I'm going to have them!

NETTLETON. (*Holding up hand—sternly*) Boggs! Don't irritate me—with such a trivial matter. Go see who's at that door.

JOHNS. All right! (*Exits U. R.*)

NETTLETON. (*Grins after him; turns to the telephone. Goes to 'phone by way of L. side of the table*) Hello—6170 Lenox—(*Again glancing at the door*) Poor old Boggsy! But where ye sow, there also shall ye reap! (*In 'phone*) Hello! Is that Mr. Vanderholt's home? Oh, hello, Van! How are you? Fine! Did you find you could make it for dinner this evening? Good boy! Come right along over. I have a surprise for you. What? (*JOHNS enters U. R., carries large bundle*) No, I can't tell you over the 'phone—the servants are hanging around. (*JOHNS makes an awful face*) Put on your Tux and hurry. Good-bye! (*Hangs up the receiver and sits on the settee L.*) Well, Boggs, what was it?

JOHNS. Your damned laundry! (*JOHNS throws the bundle of laundry at NETTLETON so that it hits him on the arm and falls open, the laundry falling all over the floor*)

NETTLETON. (*Throwing up his arm to protect himself as the laundry is thrown, then jumping up and facing JOHNS*) Why—you—you—impertinent—say, look here! (*Takes small red note book from his vest pocket; smiles—as he makes a note*) Did you know that this piece of work is going to cost you just one hundred dollars?

JOHNS. (*Laughs*) Yes, I know it—but it's worth it! (*Laughs*) This is the first half minute of actual enjoyment I've had since I came into this house.

NETTLETON. Then I'll give you another. You pick up my shirts. (*NETTLETON goes up to the mantel and stands with back to JOHNS*)

JOHNS. With pleasure, sir. (*Goes over to the laundry, walks over it, stoops, picks it up, wraps it all up in a knot, puts it on the settee, then goes R., smiling. Leaves three collars on the floor*)

NETTLETON. (*To front of the settee*) A nice way to act—(*In an injured tone*) and after all my thoughtfulness—and consideration of you. Do you know what day this is?

JOHNS. No, I've lost track of the days lately. (*Few steps R.*)

NETTLETON. It's the twenty-fourth of November. *Your birthday.*

JOHNS. (*Laughs sarcastically*) Many happy returns. (*Shakes hands with himself*)

NETTLETON. (*With sincerity, to fool JOHNS*) But since you behave as you do, you completely destroy my pleasure in the whole affair. There ought to be one day in the year when you and I could bury the hatchet.

JOHNS. (*Really touched*) Oh, well, if—if you feel that way, I'm with you. (*Extends hand*) I'm sorry, George.

NETTLETON. (*Extends his hand as if to shake with JOHNS and as JOHNS is about to grasp it suddenly moves it upwards and scratches his head as if that was his original intention. JOHNS grits his teeth with rage. It's all right, T! We'll say no more about it. (Crosses to the table L., picks up the cone-shaped package; goes back to JOHNS)* Here's a little present I bought for you. It isn't much—but still—(*Hands it to JOHNS*)

JOHNS. (*Taking it and turning it over and over without opening it*) A present for me? That's awful good of you, old chap! Hanged if it isn't—why——

NETTLETON. Oh, no—no! I'm glad to do it. I only hope that it will be a comfort to you!

JOHNS. Well—well—looks like an Easter Lily. (*Turns it over*)

NETTLETON. (*Smiling*) Well, aren't you going to open it?

JOHNS. (*Catches one end of the paper and the duster rolls out in his right hand*) Oh! Oh! (*Puts it quickly behind him; glares at NETTLETON*) What's the idea?

NETTLETON. (*Laughing*) Ah! (*Goes to the table, gets the flat package and returns to JOHNS; unwraps the package*) Here is the other part of our little birthday celebration. (*Holds the frame to JOHNS, then up to the view of the house*) Two little sixes and a torn queen. Aren't they cute? (*JOHNS controls himself quietly, and NETTLETON places the frame on the table R., facing the house*) Now then! (*Crosses to L.*) I want you to dust this carefully—twice a day—in the morning before you serve my breakfast and in the afternoon—before I return from business; understand?

JOHNS. Yes.

NETTLETON. Sir! (*NETTLETON waits a second; JOHNS does not reply*) Sir! (*JOHNS does not answer—NETTLETON takes out the small red book*)

JOHNS. (*On seeing the book*) Sir.

NETTLETON. (*Making note*) Too late. (*Going U. C.*) We'll dine this evening at seven. (*Goes up the steps and turns at the landing*) And I trust you'll do nothing to mortify me before my guests. And, Boggs, you may serve the cocktails here. (*Goes slowly up the stairs laughing; trips as he is about to go out of sight of the house; jumps quickly*

to his feet, looks keenly at BOGGS to detect a sign of laughter; BOGGS stands at attention with a sober face; NETTLETON glares at him. Exits with great dignity)

JOHNS. It's going to cost me another hundred, but—(*Goes above the table R. and knocks the frame off the table to L., then goes and stands by the stairs*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Entering from U. R., comes to C., looks at the shoes on the floor, then goes to the table L., puts her things, bag, and so forth, on same*) Good-evening, T! (*Stoops to pick up the shoes*) My gracious! What a careless dear George is. (*JOHNS comes down and takes up the shoes; MRS. NETTLETON tries to take the shoes away; they see-saw with them*) T! You mustn't do such things. Give them to me. (*As he takes the shoes and steps back*) Why—why, don't you know it mortifies me when I see you as—as an actual—servant. (*Turns away, goes a few steps L., turns*) Oh, T, I'm ashamed! Why don't you and George stop all this nonsense?

JOHNS. No! I was the one who made a fool of myself. And I'm going through with it—if I turn purple and bust! (*Step R.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. Has George been—unkind to you again?

JOHNS. (*Airily*) Oh, no! He was particularly pleasant this evening. (*They meet center*)

MRS. NETTLETON. Which means you are telling a beautiful, splendid fib.

JOHNS. Not at all. There were any number of little things he forgot to put over. Shall I tell him you are here? (*Starts up center*)

MRS. NETTLETON. No—no! (*Following him a step*) Oh, T! I'm sorry for this, indeed I am, and I'm doing all I can to—to make it easier for you!

JOHNS. Nellie, you're a brick!

MRS. NETTLETON. No, I'm not! But I am using all my influence to make him less exacting—why, T——

NETTLETON. (*Off-stage*) Hello, sweetheart! Are you there?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*To JOHNS*) S-h-h! (*Runs up to the steps—calls up*) Yes, darling! I've just come in. (*JOHNS runs to the table R., picks up the duster, then goes to the table L.* MRS. NETTLETON to JOHNS, in a loud whisper) Don't let him see you talking to me, it—it might affect my influence over him!

JOHNS. (*In the same tone*) But, Nellie—there's just one thing——

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Glancing up the stairs, then back at JOHNS*) What is it?

JOHNS. (*Gathering the laundry, duster and so forth and holding it all in a bunch against his chest*) If you really have any influence with him, let Coddles serve the dinner this evening. I'll stay in the kitchen and cook. I know how to boil potatoes and fry a steak—I——

NETTLETON. (*Off-stage*) Nellie!

MRS. NETTLETON. Sh-h-h!

JOHNS. (*Aside*) And put arsenic in his soup. (*Exits L. I*)

NETTLETON. (*Coming down the steps to L. of MRS. NETTLETON*) Well, well, well! Here you are at last! (*Kisses her; takes her down center*) Where have you been so late?

MRS. NETTLETON. Well, I had such a terrible lot of calls to make I forgot the time completely.

NETTLETON. I see; I was getting worried about you.

MRS. NETTLETON. Were you? (*Strokes his face*)

NETTLETON. I should think I was! (*Takes her by the elbows, looks into her eyes*) For the last

half hour I've been sitting at the window, watching every woman who came along.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Draws away from him; speaks a little sharply*) What?

NETTLETON. (*Quickly*) I mean—watching for you. You know what I mean. (*With a careless shrug*) These other women were merely disappointments.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Another step back, looking at him closely*) Are you sure?

NETTLETON. Of course I am! (*Takes her arm, leads her to the settee L.*) Now, come right over here, and we'll sit down by our own bright fireside—and—(MRS. NETTLETON *sits on L. side of the settee; NETTLETON looks at the frame JOHNS has thrown on the floor*) Excuse me just a minute. (*Picks the frame up and stands it on the table R., then makes memo. in the little red book*)

MRS. NETTLETON. What is it, dear?

NETTLETON. Nothing, only our Boggs is growing careless. I'm making a charge on his office account and a deduction—for breakage—against his wages.

MRS. NETTLETON. George, why is it you are so unkind with T?

NETTLETON. (*Laughs; goes to c., turns, faces MRS. NETTLETON*) What nonsense! It is merely wholesome discipline.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Shaking finger at him*) That's just what I mean. T is a human being, and you are not in the least considerate of him. He's so miserable and wretched all the time, that——

NETTLETON. (*Crosses to MRS. NETTLETON. Fierce tone*) What! Has that fellow been trotting to you with his troubles?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Quickly*) No, he hasn't! But I can *see* it—in the poor boy's face! It's not kind of you, darling, no, not one bit. And the

reason I thought of it, was this. (*Takes the telegram from her hand-bag*)

NETTLETON. (*As telegram is shown him*) A telegram, eh? We'll sit down and read it together. (*He sits by* MRS. NETTLETON) What does it say?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Reading*) "Will arrive this afternoon, 6:15. Love. Florence."

NETTLETON. Now *I* know all about that telegram. *I* wrote to Florence several days ago. Asked her to run down and spend a week with us. Told her you'd be delighted.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*In consternation*) With *us*? But, George dear, we can't have her *here*!

NETTLETON. Why not? She's one of your most intimate friends. I thought you'd be glad to have her.

MRS. NETTLETON. I would under ordinary circumstances, but you don't seem to—(*Earnestly*) Why, don't you know that T is head over heels in love with Florence Cole?

NETTLETON. (*Rises, crosses to c., laughs*) Yes, I know it. That was my reason for inviting her.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Rises; reproving tone*) George! (*She looks at him reproachfully*) But she'll see him here as your butler—and, naturally, you'll have to explain.

NETTLETON. And pay five thousand for the privilege? Not much!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Raises her voice slightly*) Very well; then *I'll* explain.

NETTLETON. (*Quickly*) Oh, no, you don't. I don't propose to pay five thousand for you, either. Please remember the contract.

MRS. NETTLETON. But *somebody's* got to tell her. If you can't and I can't, why, then poor T will have to do it.

NETTLETON. (*Laughs; slaps hands*) Oh, well, that's different. T has *more* reason to explain.

Besides, I can use his five thousand very nicely.
(*Crosses to R. of the table R.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*In earnest reproach*) Oh, George! It isn't fair! It's cruel! It's—ah—
(*Turns away from NETTLETON*)

NETTLETON. Look here, Nellie! Why are you always taking up for *him*?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*A step to him*) Because I have a heart! Because you never had a right to make that horrid contract.

NETTLETON. (*Heatedly*) He forced me into it!

MRS. NETTLETON. Oh——

NETTLETON. Yes, he did! For three years that fellow made my life a curse; and now I'm going to make his life a curse—for just one year from the date thereof. (*Takes a step R. and back; rubs his hands*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Pleadingly*) But, oh, how can you?

NETTLETON. Oh, I guess I can all right. And then there's Van. *He's* in love with Florence, too. Good old Van helped me a lot when he dealt me this pair of sixes, and now, by Jupiter, I'm going to fix things up for *him*.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Suddenly becoming furious*) And what of *me*?

NETTLETON. (*In astonishment*) Of you?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Crosses to L. of the table R.*) Yes, *me*! I was the *real* stake in that little gambling episode. Suppose you had become T's butler, and *I* had been that queen that's torn in half?
(*Sits L. of the table; begins to cry*)

NETTLETON. (*Rather dazed at the suddenness of it all*) But, Nellie—darling—(*Steps to her above the table*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Becoming hysterical*) And—you risked—*me*! (MR. NETTLETON *protests silently*) I've never quite forgiven you for that!

And I never will! Most women would have never rested till they had gotten even and I don't know but what I shall, too!

NETTLETON. (*Goes to her above the table. Trying to pacify her*) But, Nellie—my precious little—

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Violent hysteria—screams*) Don't talk to me! Don't argue with me. (*Looks up at him; changes tone completely; in the most matter-of-fact voice*) You know I'm nervous!

NETTLETON. (*Puts hand to his forehead to gather his wits—goes below the table R.*) All right; I won't! (*Bell off stage*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Starting again*) Ah-h-h-h-h-h-! There's Florence now—and what are we going to do—oo—oo—oo!

NETTLETON. Don't let her see you crying. Run up to your room.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Jumps to her feet; screams at him; stamps her foot*) I won't. You want to get rid of me—e—e—e—e—e ! (*Flops rather than sits in the seat, sobbing*)

NETTLETON. (*Gritting his teeth and raising his hands to heaven*) All right! Then stay where you are!

(*JOHNS enters from L. I, starts to the door U. R.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Sees JOHNS as he is about C. Warns NETTLETON in a shrill voice*) George!

NETTLETON. (*Makes a mad dash and intercepts the astonished JOHNS at C.*) Never mind, Boggs; I'll answer that.

JOHNS. (*In amazement*) What! You?

NETTLETON. (*Impatiently; yells at JOHNS, imitating his tone*) Yes, me—e—e! Can't I answer my own door-bell? (*As JOHNS stands looking at him with a blank expression on his face, NETTLETON*

yells at him in a furious voice) What's the matter with you? Clear out!

JOHNS. Yes, sir. (*As he reaches the door turns and gives NETTLETON an astonished look, exits and slams the door*)

NETTLETON. (*Starts after him*) Why—you—

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Warningly*) George!

NETTLETON. (*Stops; obtains control of himself, turns to MRS. NETTLETON with a bow*) Thank you! (*Takes out the little red book and makes entry as he goes to the door* U. R. NETTLETON exits U. R.)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Crosses to the settee L. and sits; speaks as she walks*) I don't know what she wants to come here for, anyway, and upset everything—(NETTLETON and FLORENCE are heard off U. R. exchanging greetings) My nose is all red—(*Takes a small powder puff and mirror from her hand-bag and powders her nose, then replaces them*) There, now that's all right!

NETTLETON. (*Holds the door open for FLORENCE, who runs to center. NETTLETON follows her as far as the table R., puts her bag, which he carries, on the table*) Here she is, darling! Here she is!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Springs to her feet, goes quickly to FLORENCE with radiant cordiality. Kisses her, then they hold hands and look at each other*) Why—Florence!

FLORENCE. (*Returning the embrace and the kiss*) Why, Nellie! You dear old thing!

MRS. NETTLETON. I'm so glad you've come; I've just been longing for you from the very minute I asked dear old George to write you!

NETTLETON. (*Aside, as he takes a step* D. R.) Oh, my God!

FLORENCE. Have you? How lovely! And how well you're looking!

MRS. NETTLETON. Am I? And how well you're looking!

FLORENCE. (*Turning to NETTLETON*) And how well dear old George is looking. Shall I kiss him, too? (*Turns to MRS. NETTLETON. NETTLETON looks at MRS. NETTLETON and grins*)

MRS. NETTLETON. What? (*As FLORENCE turns she is all smiles*) Why certainly—if you like—(*Starts down L., speaks aside*) Well—of all the—(*At the sound of the kiss as FLORENCE kisses the unwilling NETTLETON*) George! (*As FLORENCE looks at her, she laughs foolishly. NETTLETON tries to laugh, too*)

FLORENCE. (*Sits L. of the table R.*) There! (*Smiles at them*) Now I feel at home!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Forced laugh*) Yes—so it seems. (*Glares stealthily at NETTLETON*) But since you are at home, I won't make company of you. (*Goes to the table L., gets things*) I'm going up to dress for dinner.

FLORENCE. To dress? Good gracious! My trunk isn't here and I haven't a single thing! Are there going to be guests for dinner?

NETTLETON. Just home folks. (*Coyly*) Van is coming over.

FLORENCE. Van? Oh well, I don't mind him. Will T be here?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Rather hysterically*) T-T-T—(*Laughs and takes a few steps L.*)

FLORENCE. I've written him seven times and haven't heard one solitary word. Not even when I wired him!

NETTLETON. (*Laughing*) Yes, he'll be here.

FLORENCE. (*Rather mystified*) Has he been at the office?

NETTLETON. Well, no! He's been on a sort of a holiday! (*Goes to lean on the table, misses. MRS. NETTLETON glares at him*)

FLORENCE. Oh! Where did he go?

NETTLETON. He didn't say! (*Laughs.* MRS. NETTLETON *is very uncomfortable*)

FLORENCE. What is it, George? (*Rising*) Oh, I know. You and Nellie are giving a birthday dinner to dear old T.

NETTLETON. (*Laughs at the idea*) That's it. Especially for dear old T.

FLORENCE. (*Sits*) What's the joke?

NETTLETON. Nothing, only with Van and T both clamoring for your heart and hand, I was wondering how you'd manage them.

FLORENCE. (*Rises, step to c.*) Nonsense! They are just two silly boys and I don't care a fig for either.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Crosses to FLORENCE, catches her hand, holds the ring up to view*) No? And how about this ring?

FLORENCE. (*Jerking hand away and hiding the ring*) Stop it! That ring was given me by my own, own, uncle—as a consolation for being an old maid. (*Laughs and holds out hand*) Think it pretty?

MRS. NETTLETON. Yes, beautiful, but we are wasting time. You talk to George while I dress and—(*Starts to take FLORENCE to NETTLETON, changes her mind, and takes her to the stairs*) I mean, suppose you come along with me, dearest, and we'll have a nice, old-fashioned chat.

FLORENCE. All right; splendid; come along!

(*They go up on the first landing; MRS. NETTLETON lets FLORENCE precede her.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Turns quickly to NETTLETON. Loud whisper*) Hm! Enjoyed your little kiss, didn't you?

NETTLETON. (*Same tone*) Sh-h-h, she'll hear you! (*Loud voice as FLORENCE turns*) Run along,

girls! I've got to go up, too, to shave.

FLORENCE. Good! And if Nellie doesn't mind—I'll hold your shaving mug. (*Exits up the stairs, laughing*)

NETTLETON. (*Quickly grabs the bag and starts for the stairs*) I'll be right up.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Takes the bag away from NETTLETON as he comes up on the stairs*) I think, Mr. Nettleton, you had better shave in the bathroom. (*Exits up the stairs*)

(NETTLETON *exits up the stairs after* MRS. NETTLETON, *as* JOHNS *enters with the coal scuttle*
L. I. NETTLETON *laughs at* JOHNS.)

JOHNS. (*Takes the collars off the floor and throws them into the coal scuttle. He goes up L. of the table L. and puts the coal scuttle in the fire-place. FLORENCE laughs off L.*) My God! That laugh! (*Crosses excitedly to R. c.*) Oh, but it couldn't be! It couldn't!

CODDLES. (*Appearing suddenly from L. I and running to center. Holds three letters behind her back*) Sh-h-h, Mr. Boggs, sir!

JOHNS. (*Down below the table R.*) Well, what is it?

CODDLES. I got a secret for you, sir. (*As JOHNS moves away from her in alarm*) No, it hain't about me, sir.

JOHNS. (*Relieved*) Oh!

CODDLES. A gentleman come hup from the office, sir, but 'e couldn't wait.

JOHNS. Well?

CODDLES. It was about your mail!

JOHNS. (*Sharply*) What's that?

CODDLES. Yes, sir, 'e says that every day 'e's been a-puttin' 'em on the marster's desk a-thinkin' as 'ow the marster would bring 'em 'ome to you.

JOHNS. And he held back my letters, my mail! Well, contract or no contract, I'm—(*Doubles up fists, starts towards the stairs*)

CODDLES. (*Throws arms about JOHNS to prevent him from going up the stairs. He swings her around and breaks her grip*) Ho! Mr. Boggs, sir. Mr. Boggs, sir. Don't!

JOHNS. (*Shaking her off*) Keep away, will you? Keep away! (*CODDLES exhibits the letters*) Ah! You've got them! My letters—give 'em here!

CODDLES. (*Runs, with JOHNS in pursuit. CODDLES runs to L., then up L. of the table L., then to extreme R., down R. of the table R., then up L. C., turns and confronts JOHNS with letters. JOHNS pursues CODDLES as far as the table L., then chases her around the table R., and he finishes in front of the table R. CODDLES calls coyly as he gives pursuit*) You can't catch me—you can't catch me! (*As she stops and faces him*) I've got me fingers crossed! I've got me fingers crossed!

JOHNS. You've got your wires crossed.

CODDLES. Wot's they worth to you, Mr. Boggs, sir? (*Snickers*)

JOHNS. Worth? (*CODDLES snickers and draws her sleeve over her mouth. JOHNS makes face. Looks to see if anyone is looking, goes to her, bends over as if to kiss her; she raises her lips to receive the kiss, and he jerks the letters away and goes R. Speaks sharply*) Nothing!

CODDLES. (*Goes a few steps down L., twisting her apron and screws up her face as though she were going to cry. Speaks in a tearful voice*) I knowed they was from another woman—(*Dabbing her eyes with the corner of her apron, while JOHNS tears open the letters and reads*) I knowed by the color of 'em—and the sweet smell of 'em—that they come from some young 'uzzy—(*Whimpers*)

JOHNS. (*Looking up from the letter in irrita-*

tion) No, they don't! They come from my—my oldest daughter! (*Returns to letter*)

CODDLES. (*Stops whimpering, her features spread into a grin*) Do they now? Dearie me! (*Begins to edge over to him*) Hexcuse me, sir, but I just want to harsk you somethink—most particular.

JOHNS. (*Crossly*) Oh, what is it?

CODDLES. This 'ere. (*Clasps her hands and looks at him appealingly*) Wot hever become of them three lydies?

JOHNS. (*Bewildered, hand to forehead*) Three ladies—*what* three ladies?

CODDLES. Why, them wot you was married to—Hat different times, sir. (*Snickers and pulls her apron*)

JOHNS. (*As it dawns on him*) Oh! Those! (*Grins*) Coddles! (*Sternly*) I'll tell you—they came to violent ends—all of them!

CODDLES. Did they now? Dearie me! But hif Hi was one of them Mrs. Boggses—

JOHNS. (*Catches her by the wrist and takes her down the stage a step. In a fierce tone to the frightened CODDLES*) Hold on there! (*Looks at her sternly*) Do you know what became of the last one—the third unhappy Mrs. Boggs?

CODDLES. (*Trembling. Speaks timidly*) No, sir; wot?

JOHNS. (*Illustrating it*) I hung her by the heels and skinned her! (*Watches CODDLES narrowly for the effect*)

CODDLES. (*Is unnerved for the moment. Gasps, swallows. Then regaining her composure, grins at him and speaks coyly*) Yes, sir. Veay likely, sir. An' I'll bet you a tuppence she jolly well deserved it! (*Grins her broadest at him. JOHNS' face falls in despair*) But if Hi 'ad been one of them Mrs. Boggses, sir, an'—(*She attempts to put her arms about him*)

JOHNS. (*Throws her roughly off*) Oh, hell, what's the use? *Get out!* (*Sinks in chair R. of the table R.*)

CODDLES. (*Looks at him reproachfully, then waddles to L. 1, turns at door, looks at BOGGS*) My conscience! Some men his hawful 'ard to take a 'int, an' that one—(*Indicates JOHNS, and raises eyes to heaven*) My Gawd—you got to 'it 'im in the 'ead with a 'atchet! (*Exits L. 1, in disgust; door bell off stage*)

JOHNS. (*Choking with rage as he opens the letters*) Written on the eighteenth, and this is the twenty-fourth—

NETTLETON. (*Calling from off stage L.*) B-o-g-g-s!

JOHNS. (*Imitating NETTLETON*) Y-e-s! (*Jumps up and runs to stairs, calling loudly*) Sir!

NETTLETON. (*Off-stage L., savagely*) Why the devil don't you answer that door-bell?

JOHNS. (*At the foot of the stairs, bawls*) Because I though you'd taken on that job yourself!

NETTLETON. Well, you count that as another hundred—for impertinence—and see who's at that door!

JOHNS. (*Furious*) All right! (*Takes a step towards the door R.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Enters R. 2; as he sees JOHNS, he points at him and laughs*) Oh! Hello T! How are you? It took you so long to answer the bell, I walked right in. (*Laughs heartily as he sees the butler's uniform. Turns JOHNS around with his right hand as he holds his hat in his left hand. JOHNS resents it. VANDERHOLT still laughing, crosses JOHNS to R. 1*) Well, T, this is a bit rough on you. (*Extends his right hand. JOHNS puts his hand out to shake. As he does so, VANDERHOLT laughs and hands him his hat with his left hand*) A little service, Boggs! (*JOHNS glares at him and takes the hat. VANDERHOLT removes his coat and*

gives it to JOHNS. *Then goes above the table L. and pours himself a drink*) Ah! This does look cozy! (*Turns to* JOHNS, *cheerfully*) Well, T, how goes it?

JOHNS. (*Throws VANDERHOLT'S hat and coat on the floor, on pillows on floor near the window seat, then comes to VANDERHOLT*) I'm rather glad to see you and by yourself!

VANDERHOLT. (*Coming down R. of the table L. to front of same. (Slips highball)*) You flatter me. What's the secret?

JOHNS. It isn't a secret, it's pretty well wide open. I want that contract cancelled and I want it done *now*. (*Comes down c.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Laughs lightly*) Cancel your contract? Ask me something easy. (*Sits on the settee*)

JOHNS. I don't ask it—I demand it!

VANDERHOLT. (*Puts his glass on the table L.*) Now, see here, T—you know perfectly well—that agreement can *only* be annulled by mutual consent.

JOHNS. Not when *you* drew it.

VANDERHOLT. No!

JOHNS. And you call yourself a lawyer!

VANDERHOLT. (*Smiling*) Well, I manage to make a living.

JOHNS. But how? By drawing up illegal contracts.

VANDERHOLT. What's that? And why is *yours* illegal?

JOHNS. Because all the advantages are on his side. Any court will see it.

VANDERHOLT. (*Rises*) All right then, if I don't know my business, suppose you consult some other lawyer. (*Few steps L., turns, smiles at* JOHNS)

JOHNS. (*Bitterly*) I can't. If I told a lawyer—or anybody else—it would cost me five thousand dollars cash. *You* put that in, as a special clause.

VANDERHOLT. (*Laughs; goes to* JOHNS) And you signed the agreement. You go into a thing because you think you've got the big soft end of it, but when you find you haven't, you put up a howl. If you don't like the contract—break it! (*Dismisses the subject with a wave of the hand; goes a few steps* L.)

JOHNS And forfeit all my interest in the business? Another of your infernal clauses! *That's* the way you've tied me up! That's what you have done to me. But I'll tell you there are two things that are *not* in the contract—

VANDERHOLT. (*Laughs*) Good Lord! Did I forget something? What are they? (*Goes to* JOHNS)

JOHNS. First, my personal mail. George has been holding it at the office, and no matter what it costs me, *I'm going—to—punch—his—nose!*

VANDERHOLT. Oh! Held your mail, did he? Well, T, I agree with you, that isn't exactly fair. I'll speak to George about it. What's your other grievance? (*Few steps* L.)

JOHNS. Florence!

VANDERHOLT. Florence? Well, what about Florence?

JOHNS. (*Pointing finger*) You arranged for Nellie to know about the contract and you've got to arrange for Florence to know.

VANDERHOLT. Why?

JOHNS. Because you've put me in a hole. I can't even write to her without lying; and I'm not going to lie to her. (*Crosses to* R. C.)

VANDERHOLT. (*Thoughtfully*) Um—I see. Well—if that's what you want, you'll have to arrange it with George.

JOHNS. (*Goes to* VANDERHOLT) Meaning that you won't do it!

VANDERHOLT. No—I won't. (*Turns away*)

JOHNS. (*Angrily. Shakes his fist at VANDERHOLT*) And I know why—because you planned it! Deliberately! To put me out of the running and get the inside track yourself!

VANDERHOLT. (*Wheeling sharply*) Hold up there! Don't make me lose my temper. You had a fair deal, didn't you? (*JOHNS makes an impatient movement*) And an outside party cut the cards. Suppose *you* had won and George had become *your* butler?

JOHNS. Wouldn't Florence want to know *why*? (*Complaining tone*) That's what I claim! You've jobbed me—got me going and you've got me coming! (*Illustrates it*) But I know a *why* to *force* you to tell her—and I won't break the contract either.

VANDERHOLT. How?

JOHNS. I'm going to telegraph Florence to-day saying I am safe and well and for further information please apply to Mr. Thomas J. Vanderholt, referee. (*Gazes at VANDERHOLT in triumph*)

VANDERHOLT. Wha—(*Puts up his hand*) Oh, no, you don't! You—

JOHNS. (*Checking him*) And when that little lady comes down from Albany—it's nighty-night for you! (*Waves good-bye at VANDERHOLT. VANDERHOLT pauses thoughtfully*) Well—will you tell her?

VANDERHOLT. (*Faces him, his jaw set*) No! My interest in Miss Florence is a personal matter, *not* mentioned in the contract—(*Stops JOHNS as he starts to speak*) But if you give information even *leading* toward the contract—it would be equivalent to a direct violation.

JOHNS. (*Raises his voice*) It wouldn't at all. It—

VANDERHOLT. (*Drowns his voice*) In *your* opinion—(*Jauntily*) But as referee, with power

to decide all questions of dispute, I'm afraid I should decide the point *against* you. Get it? Keep it! (*Slaps JOHNS on the chest and walks to L., laughing heartily*)

JOHNS. (*Boiling*) All right! Then I'll find some other way to get you, if it lands me in a hospital. (*Raises his clenched fists and his voice*) And as for George B. Nettleton—I'll——

NETTLETON. (*Calling from off-stage L.*) Boggs! (*JOHNS at once comes to attention. VANDERHOLT laughs*) Is that Mr. Vanderholt down there?

VANDERHOLT. (*Runs up to the steps. Laughing at JOHNS and calling up to NETTLETON. JOHNS goes to the door L. 1*) Yes! Hello, George! How are you?

NETTLETON. (*From off-stage L.*) Tip-top, thanks! Be down in a minute; tell Boggs to serve the cocktails!

(*JOHNS grits his teeth.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Comes down-stage to R. of the table L.*) Boggs, your master's voice! (*JOHNS looks daggers at VANDERHOLT*) By the way, of course you understand—there'll be a nominal fee of fifty dollars for legal consultation.

JOHNS. (*L. of the table L., beside himself with rage*) What! I won't pay it, you get that! (*Shouts*) I won't! What do you and George think I am, a gold mine?

NETTLETON. (*Comes downstairs to c., speaks as he appears*) Why, Boggs! (*VANDERHOLT crosses to R.*) How dare you assume that attitude toward my guests? Remember your position. (*Points to L., speaks sternly*) Go get those cocktails. (*Comes to R. of the table L.*)

JOHNS. All right! (*With spirit*) But say! And get out your little red book. I'm going through

with that contract, no matter *what* you do to me. But in one year—if I'm still alive—I'm going to crawl all over you! Both of you! Why, you——

(NETTLETON *takes out the red book*; JOHNS *stops short, coughs, and exits meekly* L. I. NETTLETON and VANDERHOLT *laugh*.)

VANDERHOLT. George—aren't you a little rough on him?

NETTLETON. (*Airily*) Oh, no! One always has trouble with one's servants.

VANDERHOLT. Well, he *has* got grit! Come on, now; give the devil his due!

NETTLETON. I do. He's pretty rank, I will admit, but he is a much better butler than he is a business man. (*Crosses to L.*)

VANDERHOLT. All right, it's not my funeral. (*Crosses to table R., picks up book*) What's the little surprise you had for me?

FLORENCE. (*Appearing at the head of the stairs*) Oho! (*Calls*) Good-evening, Mr. Vanderholt!

VANDERHOLT. (*Running to the foot of the stairs*) Why, Miss Florence! (*As she comes down, shakes her hands and they both come down c.*) This is a pleasure! When did you get to town?

FLORENCE. (*Beaming*) Just came. And right on time for T's birthday party. (NETTLETON *sings and laughs*. VANDERHOLT *hums and goes R*. FLORENCE *looks at them in surprise*) Well, what is it?

VANDERHOLT. (*Going to FLORENCE. Speaks a trifle nervously*) Oh, nothing—nothing—only—(*Forced laugh*) I was so pleasurably astonished at seeing you, that it knocked everything out of my head.

FLORENCE. Oh, you flatterer! (*Goes a few*

steps to NETTLETON) George! Is there anything I can put my violets in? (*Goes to the mantel looking for vase*)

NETTLETON. Why, certainly—(*Up L. of table L. to the bell which is R. of the stairs on the wall. Rings same*) I'll ring for the butler!

(VANDERHOLT and NETTLETON signal each other when FLORENCE is not looking.)

FLORENCE. (*As she sees the vase on the mantel L.*) No, no, no! Don't trouble. Here's something! (*Goes to above the table L. after getting the vase from the mantel*)

NETTLETON. (*Beating a hasty retreat up the stairs*) No trouble I assure you. In fact, it will be a pleasure to him, especially to him. Excuse me—

(NETTLETON and VANDERHOLT signal wildly to each other. NETTLETON exits quickly up the stairs and VANDERHOLT puts his hand over his mouth to keep from laughing and disappears R. I.)

FLORENCE. (*Hums a bit of a late song, softly, as she fills the vase with vichy and puts the violets in it. Crosses to the table R., puts the vase on same, and stands admiring the effect. As JOHNS enters from L. I with a tray upon which are the two cocktails ordered by his master. He reaches c. before either is aware of the presence of the other. Both become cognizant of the fact at the same time. FLORENCE turns quickly. JOHNS, with a gulp drops the cocktails on the floor and turning sideways to FLORENCE attempts to hide his identity by holding the tray, a small one, over the right side of his face. He stands shaking and breathing hard. FLORENCE, with a startled scream rushes to JOHNS and pulls the tray away from his face. He bows his head in*

shame) T! (*Pause as she gazes wildly at him unable to grasp it*) T! What does this mean? Those awful clothes! (*Sharply, as she wrings her hands*) And those horrible side whiskers! (JOHNS makes a feeble attempt to cover the whiskers) Where have you been?

JOHNS. (*Tries to explain; his mouth opens; he makes the movements, but no sound accompanies it. Finally with a desperate effort and nearly choking, he gets out the words*) Here for—two weeks! (*The strain on JOHNS is so great that his knees tremble*)

FLORENCE. Here? But I heard that you were on a holiday.

JOHNS. (*L. a step. Laughs rather hysterically*) Holiday—ha, ha!

FLORENCE. What? You were neither away nor at your office and never told me a single thing? (*Coming to him*) Then tell me now.

JOHNS. Florence—(*He turns to her impulsively, stops, and turns away*)

FLORENCE. Oh, T, what is it? I haven't had one line or word and I've just been waiting—waiting—

JOHNS. (*Swings tray gently to and fro*) So have I!

FLORENCE. (*Almost crying*) But how—why? Darling—tell me—please!

JOHNS. Florence—I can't!

FLORENCE. (*Back a step*) You—mean you won't! (*As he makes no answer*) Then I'll find out! (*Runs on the stairs—second step*) George! Van! Where are you? (JOHNS starts out L. on tiptoe. FLORENCE turns and catches him. Calls sharply to him. Stamps foot) T, come back here! (JOHNS gives a nervous start and stops. FLORENCE goes to JOHNS—in sweetest tone, pleads with him) Darling! What can it mean? Is there anything

you could conceal from me? (*Comes to him, puts hands on his chest*) Don't you know I love you—with all my heart! And I have been worrying till I'm almost ill—and the moment George wrote me asking me to come——

JOHNS. (*Fiercely*) What's that? George wrote you—asked you *here*? (*JOHNS starts for the stairs with doubled fists*) Oh, wait till I get hold of him!

FLORENCE. (*Intercepting him. Catching his coattails, they swing around*) Darling! Don't! Please! Listen——

JOHNS. (*Coming down-stage, fuming*) He did it—on purpose.

FLORENCE. Did *what*? You tell me nothing and I'm all upset. No answer to my letters—no answer, to *me*, the woman who is to be your wife. (*Pathetically*) And I find you here in buttons—(*JOHNS turns away, slightly to R., and tries to cover the buttons*) and a pair of unspeakable monkey whiskers—(*JOHNS puts his hand over the whiskers on the right side of his face. FLORENCE rings her hands wildly, takes a few steps R., turns and speaks hopefully*) Oh! Oh! It's a joke—tell me—*isn't it?*

JOHNS. (*Smiles bitterly; shakes head sadly*) A joke? No, Florence—that's the worst guess you've made yet.

FLORENCE. (*Draws back a step*) Oh, I see! Then it's something you're ashamed of?

JOHNS. (*Turning resolutely*) No, I'm *not* ashamed; and if you'll only trust me—and wait for me——

FLORENCE. How long?

JOHNS. Er—eleven months and two weeks.

FLORENCE. (*Steps back*) Eleven mon— I won't! I want to know now! (*He again makes movement to tell her, then makes helpless gesture and turns*

away. FLORENCE *takes on a more severe tone*) Don't carry this thing too far; I haven't a temper for nothing! (*Tearfully*) And if you're trying wilfully to make me angry or humiliated——

JOHNS. (*Anguish in his voice*) Florence!

FLORENCE. (*Relenting*) No, no, no, forgive me! I've been so happy, loving you, and trusting you. Won't you trust me—and tell me everything?

JOHNS. (*With determination*) Will I? (*Puts the tray under his arm, takes a long breath, and makes great preparation to tell her. Motions her to come to his side, then puts his arms out to describe it*) I came into this house—(*FLORENCE leans against him; nods at him to go on*) The conditions were—(*Pauses. FLORENCE urges him on. He takes another breath*) Whereby—(*Another breath*) Inasmuch as—(*At this point JOHNS goes to pieces; his courage leaves entirely; he shakes his head miserably and in a broken voice speaks to FLORENCE*) I can't! (*JOHNS turns away from FLORENCE and hangs his head*)

FLORENCE. (*Furiously; draws back from him*) Very well, Mr. Johns, since you've brought it on yourself, there's but one thing to do—(*Turns from him—speaks aside*) As hard as it is to do it. (*Bites her lips, takes off the ring, goes to him, holds it out for him to take. As JOHNS does not take it, she gently raises his arm; he opens his hand; FLORENCE reluctantly places the ring in it*) I don't want it; take it! I don't want it, I don't—(*She half holds out her hand to take the ring back, when JOHNS closes his hand. FLORENCE begins to cry*) want it, I don't want it! (*Runs and jumps in the big armchair R. of the table R., lands on her knees in the chair on the last word, with her back to the audience*)

JOHNS. (*Heartbroken*) Thank you. (*Goes to the door L. I, turns and holds out ring*) This is the

first little thing of actual value—that has come my way—for two whole weeks. (*Holds out the tray, places the ring on it, and exits L. 1*)

FLORENCE. (*Rises quickly as JOHNS exits. Tearfully*) Oh, it can't be true! It can't! It's too impossible! (*Runs to the door L. 1*) T darling—T, I didn't mean it; won't you please come back? (*Door opens and FLORENCE steps up-stage a bit and JOHNS enters with dustpan and whisk-broom; marches to c., sweeps up the broken cock-tail glasses, then marches out. Exits L. 1, light door slam*) For the love of Mike! (*Angrily*) Oh! How perfectly disgusting! (*She runs up to the first landing on stairs and calls*) George! George Nettleton—you come down here at once! (*NETTLETON enters, followed by MRS. NETTLETON by way of the stairs. FLORENCE goes to front of the table R., then back to c.*) Now, George—and you too, Nellie, I want to know what this means!

NETTLETON. (*Goes to L. of the table R.* MRS. NETTLETON goes down-stage L. of the table L. to front of same) Goodness! Why the excitement—what—what means?

FLORENCE. (*Furiously*) There's no use trying to evade me. Sit down—(*NETTLETON sits. MRS. NETTLETON remains standing. Sharply*) Both of you!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Elevating her eyebrows*) And in my house!

FLORENCE. (*Raising her voice*) Sit down! (*MRS. NETTLETON does so*) Now! Why is it I find one of my personal friends—as butler in your household? (*She looks from one to the other*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Enters from the library R. 1 and crosses above the table R. to FLORENCE*) Miss Florence, if you'll permit an outsider to—er—

FLORENCE. (*Looking at him coldly*) Never mind, Mr. Vanderholt. Will you please sit down, too?

VANDERHOLT. (*Taken by surprise*) Oh—ha, ha—yes—certainly—with pleasure! (*Goes back of the table R. to R. of same. In innocent voice to NETTLETON, with a note of appeal in it*) What's the trouble, George? (*Sits R. of the table*)

FLORENCE. (*Sharply*) Mm! Another Mr. Innocence! Now, George Nettleton, I want my question answered.

NETTLETON. (*Nervously*) Well, Florence, I'd like to—really—but to tell you the truth, there is only *one* person I know of—who can *afford* to answer.

FLORENCE. You mean T—(*Bites her lip and corrects herself*) Mr. Johns? (*NETTLETON nods*) I've asked him!

NETTLETON. (*Springs from his seat; shouts*) What? He told you?

FLORENCE. (*Sharply*) No, he didn't!

NETTLETON. (*Disappointed tone*) Oh, what a pity! (*Flops into his seat, rests his elbow on the table, and his head on his hand*)

FLORENCE. But—you seem to lose sight of the fact—all three of you—of the most important point. As for Mr. Johns, he means nothing to me—abso-lutely *nothing*! I'm demanding this explanation not on his account, but mine!

NETTLETON. (*Goes quickly to FLORENCE, MRS. NETTLETON following his example; all three speak together until JOHNS enters*) Well, Florence, in that case—if you are not personally interested in T, what difference does it make whether he is a butler or not?

MRS. NETTLETON. Just don't worry about it, dear; everything will all come out all right and as soon as I can tell you I will.

FLORENCE. I don't care! There's something wrong about it and I tell you I'm going to find out.

(All stop quickly as JOHNS enters L. 1 with a tray of cocktails (four). He holds the tray out to MRS. NETTLETON, who takes two, gives one to FLORENCE. NETTLETON reaches for one and JOHNS lowers the tray slightly and NETTLETON grabs the air. JOHNS walks to VANDERHOLT, who takes a cocktail)

VANDERHOLT. *(Laughing)* Thank you, T!
(JOHNS goes up R., then back of the table R. to NETTLETON, on whom he jabs in the small of the back with the tray as he is looking back at the laughing VANDERHOLT. NETTLETON refuses the cocktail.Laughs) Better take one, George; you need it. *(NETTLETON takes one. All look at JOHNS as he exits solemnly L. 1. MRS. NETTLETON goes to front of the settee L.)* Well, here's to the ladies! *(Rises and holds up his glass. No one drinks)* What's the matter, George? Aren't you indulging?

NETTLETON. *(Smelling the cocktail and putting it on the table R.)* Not *that* one. I don't like the looks of it. *(VANDERHOLT laughs)*

FLORENCE. *(Puts her cocktail on the table L.)* Now, if you please, we'll continue. *(All sit at the same time, except FLORENCE. NETTLETON L. of the table R. MRS. NETTLETON on the settee. VANDERHOLT R. of the table R.)* I was about to say that not one of you seems to realize this insult to me.

MRS. NETTLETON. *(Rising)* Insult?

VANDERHOLT. *(Rising)* To you?

NETTLETON. *(Rising. All three must rise at the same time and the same speed)* How?

FLORENCE. *(Sharply, as she stamps her foot)* Sit down! *(All sit at the same time and with the same speed)* By inviting me here, both you and Nellie, for the sole purpose of seeing me mortified—and shamed!

MRS. NETTLETON. *(In a pathetic injured tone)*

Why, darling, how unjust you are! I didn't ask you; my husband did!

FLORENCE. (*Steps to her*) No? And not half an hour ago, to quote your own exact words, you had just been longing for me—from the very first minute you asked dear old George to write me.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Trying to cover—rises, whimpers*) George! (NETTLETON *jumps up nervously*) Take the horrid thing! (*Holds out the cocktail glass*) I've spilt it all over my new dress!

(NETTLETON *runs to her, gets the cocktail, and places it on the table R. Sits.*)

FLORENCE. I'm glad you did!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Stamps her foot. Sits settee*)

FLORENCE. I'm also glad that I haven't broken bread under this hateful roof! And now, George Nettleton, I'm going to a hotel. (*A step or two to NETTLETON, then up to the first landing on the steps*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Goes up R., then to the steps*) One minute, Miss Florence, if you'd only——

FLORENCE. (*On the first landing, points finger at him*) Never mind, Mr. Vanderholt, from your look of cherubic innocence, I think you are in this, too.

VANDERHOLT. (*Expostulating*) I? Oh, come now, Miss Florence, it's hardly fair to put the whole blame on me! (*Glances at GEORGE*)

NETTLETON. (*Rises*) No, and it isn't fair to put it all on me! (*Glances at MRS. NETTLETON*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Rises, goes few steps to c.*) And what have I to do with it—nothing—nothing! (*Addresses NETTLETON*) And to prove it, I have a great mind to tell her the whole thing! (*Starts up to FLORENCE*)

NETTLETON. (*Runs to her quickly*) Nellie, for the Lord's sake, don't! (*Takes her down to the settee—puts his hand over her mouth, and she bites him and then sits on settee*) Ouch! (*Holds hand tenderly and goes down L.*)

(*As VANDERHOLT laughs FLORENCE stops him.*)

FLORENCE. That will do, Mr. Vanderholt! It's no laughing matter. That applies to all of you. I may not have a vote, but before I get through with this affair somebody is going to wish that I was wearing breeches. (*Exits up the stairs*)

NETTLETON. Weough! Now what are we going to do? (*To VANDERHOLT*) It's up to you, Van! Get at it!

VANDERHOLT. (*In astonishment as he comes to c.*) Me? Why me?

NETTLETON. Why not? You appointed yourself as referee—with power to settle all questions of dispute. This is a question of dispute. (*Does VANDERHOLT business with the cuffs*) What are you going to do about it?

VANDERHOLT. Oh! Now, naturally, this case is going to call for some pretty nice diplomatic *work*. Of course, you understand, there's be a nominal legal fee, but——

NETTLETON. (*Excitedly*) Oh, to hell with the fee!

MRS. NETTLETON. George!

NETTLETON. I beg your pardon, my dear. (*Goes to VANDERHOLT c.*) Go on, go on.

VANDERHOLT. Thank you. Therefore, I suggest, that you first take your wife off anywhere and leave me here to tackle Florence when she comes downstairs.

NETTLETON. *Will* you? (*Grasping his hand*) You good old Van!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Beginning to weep*) No one ever seems to consider me—no one! (*Sobs; uses handkerchief*)

NETTLETON. (*Turning to her*) But, my darling child, that's just what we are considering. (*Goes to MRS. NETTLETON. VANDERHOLT goes up to the window*) Now come on, sweetheart, go right up-stairs, and lie down—

(MRS. NETTLETON *rises and* NETTLETON *takes her up to the stairs.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*As she is about on the stairs; stops suddenly*) What! Where she is! No, no!

NETTLETON. (*Takes her quickly to R.*) All right, dear; all right. We'll go into the library; come on, darling, come on!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*As she nears the door R., stops. Weeps*) I don't want to go into the library. I want to go into the kitchen. (NETTLETON *takes her L. a few steps and she changes her mind once again*) Because I know the dinner is burnt to a horrible black crisp.

NETTLETON. (*Takes her swiftly to R. I. She exits weeping.* NETTLETON *stops in the door; raises his eyes to heaven*) Why go to Germany? (*Exits*)

VANDERHOLT. (*As FLORENCE comes down the stairs with her hat on and her satchel in her hand*) Florence! One minute, please! (*Stops her c.*)

FLORENCE. (*With the hat on one side. Looks at him*) Well, what is it?

VANDERHOLT. First, upon my sacred word of honor, I never knew you were here, or coming here, until I saw you—do you believe me?

FLORENCE. If you say so, yes. (*Crosses to front of the settee*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Beaming again*) Thank you. Now, as to both George and Nellie——

FLORENCE. Wait! What is your interest in this affair?

VANDERHOLT. Purely friendly—diplomatic—but principally *you!* (*Starts quickly to FLORENCE*) Of course, you know, my dear Florence——

FLORENCE. (*Checking him*) Have I given you the right to call me your dear Florence?

VANDERHOLT. (*Taken aback*) Well, no; but—but I'm *asking* for the right. I'm——

FLORENCE. (*Coldly*) And why at such a time?

VANDERHOLT. I—I didn't *intend* to—only—er—well, you rather forced my hand. (*As she looks at him sharply*) Oh! I didn't mean it *that* way, but—but you see Miss Florence I have a purely legal mind, and——

FLORENCE. Very well, we'll put it on a purely legal basis. (*Flops on settee*) Now then, you are asking for a certain right. In other words, you want to marry me. (*As VANDERHOLT steps back and gasps*) A hearing for the plea is granted. Go on.

VANDERHOLT. (*Laughing nervously*) Thank you—I will. Only you—well, you do have a way of taking the wind out of a fellow's sails.

FLORENCE. (*Waves her hand*) Then paddle. You delay proceedings!

VANDERHOLT. All right, I suppose I've got to. As I er—intimated before I—I had no intention of making love to you—that is—to-day, but since you bring the subject up yourself—(*As she registers*) I—mean—I—would like some sort of an answer.

FLORENCE. Very well; I'll give it. (*As he steps towards her*) But first I want to ask a legal question.

VANDERHOLT. Yes?

FLORENCE. (*Beckons; he sits beside her*) Do

you think it just or reasonable for two young people—such as you and I—to start out on their married life with—with a secret holding them apart?

VANDERHOLT. (*Steals his arm about her*) Well—no—they shouldn't.

FLORENCE. Good! Then—why is T a butler?

VANDERHOLT. (*Rises quickly, backs away to center, holds hands out as if to ward FLORENCE off. Laughingly*) Oh! No, no. Come now, Miss Florence, that isn't exactly fair. It isn't professional for a lawyer in a case to—well—(*Suddenly realizes his mistake and tries to stop himself*)

FLORENCE. (*With a little cry*) Ah! So you were in it! (*VANDERHOLT slaps his hands together in anger at himself and goes to R.*) Good again! But since you, too, refuse to tell me—(*Rises and goes to center*) My answer is—

VANDERHOLT. (*Imploringly; goes to her*) Hold on! Don't (*Nervously*) Of course, if you put it that way, I have no choice but to throw myself on the mercy of the court. (*VANDERHOLT crosses back of FLORENCE, up to the stairs, looks up, then comes down center, looks L., as FLORENCE goes a few steps R., looks to see no one is there, then back to center R. of VANDERHOLT. VANDERHOLT speaks in a loud whisper, excitedly*) Briefly it was this: George and T just couldn't get on in business and fought like cats and dogs. Each claimed that the other was only fit for a servant and—there you are!

FLORENCE. (*Pulls his sleeve*) Yes—what else?

VANDERHOLT. As a friend of both I tried to save them the scandal of a law suit and—and so they signed an agreement—for one year—and played a hand of showdown to see who'd be the servant!

FLORENCE. And why didn't George tell me that?

VANDERHOLT. Because by telling any one—he'd lose five thousand, cash.

FLORENCE. (*Pretending gayety, to further entrap VANDERHOLT. Laughing*) Oh, I see! But it was funny! (*Both laugh*) And you suggested the idea—(VANDERHOLT swells up—nods delightedly) How clever of you, Van!

(VANDERHOLT and FLORENCE laugh heartily.)

VANDERHOLT. (*More than pleased with FLORENCE'S approval. Straightens up and in a depreciative tone, to appear modest, as he struts down L.*) Oh, I don't know. At least it was a solution of the problem!

FLORENCE. (*As VANDERHOLT laughs with her and she at him*) A perfectly delightful one! (*They laugh*) Of course you drew up the agreement?

VANDERHOLT. I did, indeed—(*Enthusiastically*) And I tell you, Florence, I sewed it up with twine! (*Goes through the motions of sewing. Walks down L. and back to FLORENCE*)

FLORENCE. (*Glares at him when he turns his back but greets him laughingly as he turns*) No doubt you did! Then too you dealt the cards?

VANDERHOLT. (*Few steps to her. Chuckling and rubbing his hands*) Um—hum! George won on a pair of sixes. (*Laughs. FLORENCE goes to the table R., laughs with him*) But now that you do know, Florence—(*Goes to her*)

FLORENCE. (*Suddenly becoming sober and freezing VANDERHOLT with a look*) I'll give my answer. (*Sits L. of the table R., looks front. Determinedly*) I wouldn't marry you—if you were the last lone man on the face of the earth and—I was fifty-five years old!

VANDERHOLT. (*Steps back a step—pleadingly*) Florence!

FLORENCE. That's all. (*Rises; faces him*) No, not one word! (*Points finger at him*) The criminal premeditation—was yours! (*Coldly*) And now, my legal-minded friend, your case is dismissed—with costs.

VANDERHOLT. (*As he goes to the stairs*) Not quite, your honor. (*Turns on the first landing*) No lawyer or lover should admit defeat until after the appeal.

FLORENCE. No—why not?

(JOHNS enters L. 1; puts book on the table L.)

VANDERHOLT. For further information, please apply to Mr. T Boggs Johns, the man who couldn't beat a pair of sixes! (*Exits up the steps, laughing at JOHNS*)

FLORENCE. Come here, T; I want to tell you something.

JOHNS. (*Advancing impulsively to c.*) And I want to speak to you! Florence—I'm going to tell you everything—if it means my last cent on earth—my one last crumb of bread—I'm here because—

FLORENCE. (*Puts hand lightly over his mouth*) No, no, no! Don't—it's too expensive! (*Slyly*) Besides, I've found out!

JOHNS. (*Hopefully*) Did George tell you?

FLORENCE. No—you haven't won five thousand—yet!

JOHNS. (*Drags himself to L. of the table R. Sits*) Oh! I thought maybe my luck had turned!

FLORENCE. (*Going to him*) It won't—until you turn it. Why do you submit to this?

JOHNS. Submit? I guess you haven't read that contract.

FLORENCE. (*Spiritedly*) Hang the contract!

(JOHNS looks at her, sighs and shakes head as FLORENCE hurries on) The stronger it is the better I like it. It runs for a year, doesn't it?

JOHNS. (*Gazes into space.. In dispirited tone*) Yes, for one whole year!

FLORENCE. (*Simply bursting with enthusiasm at her idea*) Oh, T, brace up and be a man! (*Puts hands on JOHNS' shoulders*) To my mind; the word *man* is better than the word *master*. Why don't you turn the tables on him?

JOHNS. (*Does not get the idea. Blankly*) Turn 'em on George—how?

FLORENCE. (*Impatiently*) What's his weakest point?

JOHNS. (*Looks at her miserably. Speaks in a weak voice*) I don't know.

FLORENCE. (*Beats time with her finger as she speaks*) What's—any—poor—married idiot's—weakerst—point?

JOHNS. (*Shakes his head*) I don't know—I don't—(*Suddenly*) His wife?

FLORENCE. (*Laughs approvingly*) Of course—his wife. (*Earnestly and with speed*) That's where you've got to hit him—*hard*! As long as you are miserable, he's *happy*. Make him UNHAPPY. Serve him and serve him well—with energy and diligence! But always with a smile. And George will wonder *why*. Keep close to Nellie. (JOHNS smiles) But not *too* close—(*Runs swiftly to JOHNS, sits on his knee and wraps arms about him. JOHNS hugs her and shakes his head*) mind you, for I'll be looking on. But hit him, T, and hit him where he lives. *He* wants you to break the contract. (*Rises, goes to c., faces him*) Make him break it! Do you get me?

JOHNS. (*Grinning*) Yes, I do!

FLORENCE. Then go to it and—*get him*—but don't forget to smile!

JOHNS. (*Opens his arms*) Florence, my queen!

(FLORENCE runs to him, they kiss three times, FLORENCE on his knee. CODDLES enters from L. I, takes in the situation, and emits a scream which grows, and she makes her way to right stage. FLORENCE laughs and runs up on the first landing. NETTLETON runs on from R., bumps into the screaming CODDLES, who exits R. MRS. NETTLETON follows NETTLETON and stands R. stage. VANDERHOLT runs down the stairs as CODDLES enters from L. and goes down-stage L. of the table L. to front of same. JOHNS laughs loudly, and drinks cocktails as he laughs.)

NETTLETON. Boggs, what have you done to Coddles?

JOHNS. Coddles? (*Leans back in the chair. Laughs uproariously*)

NETTLETON. (*Getting out the little red book*) Stop that! Do you hear me—what the devil does it mean?

JOHNS. (*Puts his feet on the table, laughing*) Say, George; just charge me up with another hundred, will you? I can't tell you why, but it's worth it! (*Starts to drink the cocktail*)

NETTLETON. (*Makes note in book*) He's drunk! Van, make a legal note of that! He's drunk!

CURTAIN.

(*Ring on "It's worth it"—Calls fast.*)

(*Second Curtain—JOHNS still laughing and almost out of his seat.*)

(*Third Curtain—Company.*)

(*Fourth Curtain—MRS. NETTLETON.*)

(*Fifth Curtain—MR. VANDERHOLT.*)

(*Sixth Curtain—CODDLES.*)

(*Seventh Curtain—FLORENCE.*)

(*Eighth Curtain—JOHNS and NETTLETON.*)

(*Hold the curtain until after the partners bow—
they make faces at each other—Ring.*)

ACT III.

SCENE:—*The same as Second Act.*

TIME:—*A week later. Evening.*

MUSIC AT RISE:—"Somebody else is getting it."

JOHNS. (*Enters at rise from L. I with tray of tea things, takes them to small table R., carries the duster under his left arm. JOHNS takes up the song "Somebody else is getting it" where the orchestra leaves off and does a dance step as he crosses stage. Trips lightly to the table R., dusts a chair, and goes to table L., dusts the 'phone, takes the receiver off the hook, dusts. Speaks into the 'phone, holds receiver to ear, left hand*) Hello! What's that? Oh, no, just dusting the 'phone, sweetheart; that's all, good-bye. (*One step to the frame cards on the table R., dusts, sings "Somebody else"*) Ah! Two little sixes and a torn queen.

CODDLES. (*CODDLES comes down the stairs with dustcloth, puzzled to see JOHNS in a good humor*) Mr. Boggs, sir!

JOHNS. (*Laughs*) Ah! Hello, Coddles, are you there?

CODDLES. (*Comes to the table L.*) Ho, Mr. Boggs, sir, wot makes you so hawful 'appy?

JOHNS. (*Goes few steps to CODDLES*) I—happy, am I? (*Smiles at CODDLES, twirls duster*)

CODDLES. (*Coyly*) Ho, yes, sir, hit's just been growin' hon you for the larst 'ole week. (*Clasps hands, advances a step to JOHNS*) Hit hain't on my account, now his it?

JOHNS. (*Lightly*) Coddles, to be honest, we must oft be cruel. It is *not* on your account.

CODDLES. (*Disappointedly*) No? Wot then?

JOHNS. Sh-h-h! (*Glancing about and speaking mysteriously*) It's because—I have *arrived!* (*Strikes pose*)

CODDLES. (*Blankly*) Harrived, sir? *Where?*

JOHNS. Here! I have never realized till now the joy of being out in service. To watch! Anticipate an every yish. (*Bowing*) To serve! (*As CODDLES watches him, stepping back slowly*) Love, fortune, marriage? Bah! I only ask a serviceable feather duster—and a good, kind, loving master.

CODDLES. (*In amazement*) The marster, sir? Hour marster? Ho, Lud! I thought you was a-callin' 'im a ragin' Haffrican 'iena!

JOHNS. (*Does dance step to c.*) Oh, Coddles! You are dreaming; he's a *dove!* There's nothing that man wouldn't do for me—if he had the chance. Why, only yesterday, when he threw the inkwell, he did it so gently that it only broke the skin—(*CODDLES blinks at him*) and if I could only acquire your delicious Hinglish haccent, I believe it would please the marster varstly. (*Hums "Somebody else is getting it," dances to the door R. I, dusts same, then the door U. R., then goes to the window, stabs one of the flowers three times*)

CODDLES. (*Drops down L. c., turns back to the house, watches JOHNS; frightened; puts one hand*

to mouth, catches her apron with the other; the third time JOHNS *stabs the flower* CODDLES *turns to the audience and addresses them in sorrowful tone*) Ah, the poor nut. 'E's gone dippy in the 'ead! (*Goes up L. C.*) Hexcuse me, sir, but I know of a doctor, wot comes to see me for the cramps; 'e's hawful good, sir; han' hinexpensive, too. Han' hif you would only let him *see* you, sir, per'aps 'e might save you from a spell.

JOHNS. (*Creeps to CODDLES with a look that causes CODDLES to tremble at the knees*) Ha, ha! Now, Codlums, don't! (*Twirls the duster, tickles her face, and feet. CODDLES jumps, laughs, half pleased, and frightened*)

CODDLES. (*Laughing*) Ho, stop hit, sir! Now stop. (*Giggling*) W'y, Mr. Boggs, w'en you gets to cuttin' up that way—it—(*Giggles and shakes her apron at him*)

JOHNS. (*In mock tragic voice, as he grasps her by the wrist and takes her a step down c.*) Woman! Have a care! (*CODDLES stops laughing and looks frightened. JOHNS continues, lightly*) Remember, there are dinner guests this evening. Reserve your emotions for the privilege of passing in the plates. (*Dusts CODDLES' fingers with the duster, prances to R. around the table R. back to c.*)

CODDLES. (*Retreats a few steps in the direction of the door L. I, looking at JOHNS in terror*) Yes, sir, 'e's comin' this evening, sir.

JOHNS. (*Opens his eyes wide, grins ferociously, tiptoes towards her in a menacing manner, pokes the duster at her*) Who?

CODDLES. (*Now thoroughly frightened, edges toward the door L. I, watching JOHNS' every move. Her voice shakes*) The doctor, sir. Hi'll take the liberty of speaking to him, yes, sir. (*As JOHNS laughs idiotically and runs at her with the duster, she screams and runs out L. I*)

JOHNS. (*Laughing uproariously*) So much for Cleopatra!

FLORENCE. (*Appearing at the window, calls*) Oho—oho! (*As JOHNS turns, sees her and runs up to the window*) Sh—h—h! (*They kiss through the window—FLORENCE speaks in a whisper*) Be careful, T—where's Nellie?

JOHNS. (*In loud whisper*) Upstairs—dressing!

FLORENCE. Good! (*She leaves the window, JOHNS opens the door and FLORENCE enters U. R.; she goes down R. of the table R. to front of same. JOHNS goes R. C.*) She's getting repentant. Invited me over to dinner. Well, how's it working. Is George falling for it?

JOHNS. (*Grinning*) He loathes me! But say, I'm making an awful hit with Coddles.

FLORENCE. (*Smiles*) Yes; but I'm afraid I'm not! Dreamed last night she was *after* me—with one of these—er—scalloped-edged bread knives. (*Laughs as she comes to him*) Here! I've got a little present for you. (*Holds out small package to him*)

JOHNS. (*Backs away, holds out his hands to ward her off, shakes finger playfully at her*) No, no—that's how I got this one. (*Holds up the duster—laughs*)

FLORENCE. Yes, but open it, please. (*JOHNS opens the package disclosing an atomizer and looks at her inquiringly*) Smell it. (*JOHNS does so, then FLORENCE whispers to him*)

JOHNS. (*Smiles*) Oh, but Florence, that's so old.

FLORENCE. Wait until you see how wonderfully it works. Here is something else. (*Hands JOHNS the veil, then whispers to him. Both of them laugh heartily*)

JOHNS. Poor George!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*From off-stage*) T! T!

JOHNS. (*To FLORENCE*) Sh-h-h! Look out!
(*Calls upstairs, puts the veil and the atomizer in his pockets*) Yes, Nellie! I'm here.

(*FLORENCE runs to R. JOHNS motions her to go the other way; she runs to L., JOHNS keeping one eye on the stairs, motions her to go behind the screen—she does so.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Comes downstairs dressed for dinner. Comes down C. on a line with JOHNS*) Good-evening, T. (*As he makes a low formal bow she registers her annoyance*) Oh, please! I wish you wouldn't bow that way. You seem so like a servant.

JOHNS. (*Bowing*) Thank you, Nellie; some day I may ask you for a reference.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Laughing*) And I promise to give you any kind you want. (*JOHNS bows low*) Oh, T, you are trying to make the best of a horrid situation, and it's very brave of you.

JOHNS. And so much cheaper. George hasn't been able to charge me up with a hundred dollars in six whole days.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Throws the duster, which she takes from JOHNS, up-stage*) And I hope he never will again. I want to drop a line to Mother. Have you seen anything of my note-paper?

(*FLORENCE peeps from behind the screen. As MRS. NETTLETON starts L. she jumps back.*)

JOHNS. (*Takes MRS. NETTLETON R. to the chair L. of the table, pulls out the chair; MRS. NETTLETON sits. JOHNS speaks as he walks*) Yes; I put it away myself.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*To JOHNS, as she sits*) Thank you.

JOHNS. (*Gets the box of paper from the table L., brings it to MRS. NETTLETON, goes above the table R., places it open in front of her*) Allow me—my fountain pen!

MRS. NETTLETON. George hasn't come home yet, has he? (*As she takes the pen from JOHNS and starts to write without looking up*)

JOHNS. Not yet. He's probably—very busy—at the office!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Looking up sharply*) Why do you emphasize—"at the office?"

JOHNS. (*Turning away*) Oh, nothing—nothing! (*FLORENCE runs from behind the screen to the first landing; makes a little noise*) Coddles! Keep quiet; you're disturbing your mistress.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Returns to her writing*) Er—call him up, will you, and see if he's there.

JOHNS. (*Goes to the 'phone*) With pleasure. (*Takes the 'phone up without removing the receiver*) Three four three two Rector, please. (*Looks at MRS. NETTLETON ready to take the receiver off at a minute's notice should she look*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*As she writes*) T—have you noticed lately, what a curious change has come over George?

JOHNS. In what way?

MRS. NETTLETON. Oh, it's hard to say, exactly; but he seems so troubled—and discouraged—and then his manner—to me. Why, only the other day—you remember—when he came home early and you and I were fixing the roses in the vase. After you went out, he looked at me in the oddest sort of way and said: (*Trys to imitate NETTLETON's voice*)—"er—Nellie! I should think that fellow was quite strong enough to lift a bunch of roses by himself!" Then he used a profane word and stalked out of the room. Now what do you suppose he meant?

JOHNS. (*Virtuously*) I wonder.

MRS. NETTLETON. The poor boy doesn't seem well; and I'm afraid I haven't been very helpful to him.

JOHNS. No?

MRS. NETTLETON. When he snapped at me, I snapped back. But hereafter *I'm* going to be quite different. I'm going to be sweet and lovable and considerate—and——

JOHNS. Excuse me. (*In the 'phone*) Hello—then never mind. Thank you. (*Replaces the 'phone on table*) Office doesn't answer. (*Goes to* MRS. NETTLETON)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Looks up from her writing, without facing* JOHNS, *with rather an annoyed expression*) Oh, well, er—perhaps he's on his way home to dinner; and I have a nice little surprise for him. You know he's been wanting to have Florence over but I demurred. (*Faces* JOHNS) Oh, I know it was ugly of me, but I did. (*Back to the letter*) So to-day, I 'phoned her and asked her to come to dinner. Well—isn't that the proper spirit?

JOHNS. Magnanimous. Especially to *me*. Personally, I shall endeavor to serve her soup without spilling it down her back. (*Crosses to L.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Rising in consternation*) Oh, T! (*Goes to him, puts hands on his arm*) I wasn't thinking of *your* being in love with her. I was only thinking of the surprise—for dear old George.

JOHNS. Very kind of you, I'm sure.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Crosses to L. of the table R. Sits*) But I *want* to be kind—and especially to my husband, and from now on I'm going to prove to him that I *can* be nice to *every* one; no matter how perfectly horrid they are to me.

JOHNS. Referring, I presume, to Florence.

(FLORENCE comes down the steps and looks through

the windows on the first landing. JOHNS glances back, she signals to him that NETTLETON is coming and forms the words with her lips "GEORGE is coming." JOHNS nods and runs to above the table R., throws himself on his knees. NETTLETON appears at the window and looks in, then disappears.)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Answers JOHNS a little confusedly*) Well, I—I hardly mean it—er—just exactly that way, of course, but——

JOHNS. (*Suddenly and without warning bursts into his warm and fervent appraisal of NELLIE, rather startling the lady*) Nellie! You're an awfully generous woman. You are an intelligent woman; and what's more, you are a good woman, and if ever I have a chance to prove to you——

NETTLETON. (*Bursts in the room at R. 2, shaking with rage. Yells*) Nellie!

(JOHNS jumps to his feet, goes up to the stairs, stands at attention.)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Jumps up with a frightened exclamation, runs to the table L., taking the letter she was writing with her. Fans herself nervously with same*) Oh, George, how you startled me!

NETTLETON. (*Rushes to C., glances wildly at one, then the other, bellows at NELLIE, waving his arms*) Did I?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Her voice trembling*) Yes, you did. You know I'm not strong. You know I'm nervous. You——

NETTLETON. Never mind your nerves! (*Throws his hat on the floor. Bellows at MRS. NETTLETON*) Sit down!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Both hysterical and angry*) If you employ that tone—I won't! If you're going

to be brutal the moment you come into the house, I wish you wouldn't come at all! (*Exits up the stairs sobbing*)

JOHNS. (*Exasperatingly polite*) Pardon me, sir. Shall I take your hat and coat? (*Smiles deferentially at the enraged NETTLETON*)

NETTLETON. (*In a paroxysm of rage, shouts*) No! (*JOHNS jumps back in mock alarm*) Think I'm not capable of taking off my own coat? (*Takes off his coat and flings it on the chair L. of the table R. Keeps his eye on JOHNS all the while, glaring fiercely at him. Backs to the table L., feels about for the decanter, still keeping JOHNS under his observation*)

JOHNS. (*Smiles sweetly*) Oh! Allow me, sir!

NETTLETON. (*Shakes his fist threateningly at JOHNS, right hand, while with his left hand he gropes for the decanter*) Keep your hands off!

JOHNS. (*Backs away a step*) Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. (*NETTLETON gets the decanter, pours some whiskey in a glass, spilling half of the whiskey over the sides as his hand shakes, puts the glass down with a bang, then goes to the settee and drops down on same*) Hm—will you have your—slippers, sir?

NETTLETON. (*Hissing between his teeth*) Yes! And be quick about it! That's all you're fit for.

JOHNS. (*Sweetly*) Yes, sir; very good, sir. (*JOHNS kicks NETTLETON's hat, which is in his path, goes above the table L., gets NETTLETON's slippers from in front of the fire and comes down L. of the table to NETTLETON, who has unbuttoned his shoes. JOHNS puts the slippers on the floor as he kneels left of NETTLETON, takes off NETTLETON's left shoe, pulls his sock away from his toes, then tickles him under the sole of the foot*)

NETTLETON. (*Jerking his foot away. As soon as he gets control of himself*) Look here! What

the devil's the matter with you? (*Takes off the other shoe and puts on his own slippers*)

JOHNS. (*Rises, innocently*) With me, sir? I don't know, I'm sure. But I hope it's nothing to annoy you, sir. To what may I ask, do you allude?

NETTLETON. (*Jumps up*) To everything! First—you—you—seem so damn well satisfied. (*As JOHNS shrugs and turns away*) And ever since I caught you drunk the other day, you've been wearing a smirk that—that I couldn't pull off with a monkey wrench. (*Crosses to C. and turns to JOHNS*) Well, why don't you answer me?

JOHNS. (*Suavely*) Perhaps, sir, it's because I'm beginning to realize—my opportunities.

NETTLETON. (*Crosses to JOHNS, goes close to him. Fiercely*) What opportunities?

JOHNS. Of serving Mr. Nettleton.

NETTLETON. (*Raising his voice to a yell*) You get out of here!

JOHNS. (*Picks up the shoes, starts out L.*) Yes, sir; very good, sir.

NETTLETON. (*Yells*) Wait! (*As JOHNS pauses and turns*) Tell Mrs. Nettleton that I want to see her—in here—at once. (*Walks to R. C. quickly*)

JOHNS. (*Eagerly*) With pleasure, sir! (*Starts for the stairs on the run by way of L. of the table L.*)

NETTLETON. (*Makes a mad dash for the stairs, catches JOHNS on the first step, throws himself upon him. JOHNS falls, turns so as to face NETTLETON, who grasps him by the coat, holding him fast. JOHNS smiles. NETTLETON, fiercely*) No, you don't! I'll just do that myself. And look here, if ever I catch you hanging around her again—I'll—break—your—neck! Get me!

JOHNS. (*Rises, speaks sweetly*) Yes, sir. I get you. (*Goes to the door L. 1, turns*) In future, I shall try to be—more careful. (*Exits L. 1*)

NETTLETON. (*Puts his hand to his head, his knees give slightly and his face expresses pain*) More careful? (*Recovers himself to an extent, goes to the table L. above same and grabs up the 'phone. Savagely*) Hello! (*Slight pause, then he rattles the hook*) Hello, hello, hello! Lenox six one seven o, and hurry, will you. (*Pours some whiskey in a glass, first putting the 'phone on the table; still holds the receiver to his ear with the right hand, speaks in the 'phone*) Well, can't you get that number? (*Picks up the glass, about to drink; his attention suddenly called by voice on the wire, he speaks in the glass instead of the 'phone*) Oh, hello! (*Puts the glass down angrily and picks up the 'phone*) Hello! Is that Mr. Vanderholt's home? Oh! This is George. Say, Van, I want you to come over, will you—right away! (*Slight pause*) Of course it's important! (*JOHNS enters and stands at attention near the door L.*) What? (*Glances at JOHNS*) No, I can't tell you over the 'phone. There's something in the way, as it always is! All right, I'll look for you. Good-bye. (*NETTLETON goes to the settee; sits*)

JOHNS. (*Goes back of the table, takes the glass of whiskey that NETTLETON has poured and comes R. of NETTLETON and hands it to him*) Hm! Er—pardon me, sir. But won't you take a little stimulant?

NETTLETON. (*His head in his hands*) Mind your own business!

JOHNS. Yes, sir! I only took the liberty, because you look so tired and overworked.

NETTLETON. (*Snatches the glass from JOHNS*) Yes, I am overworked. I'm working like a dog. And you up here—loafing around all day—and I don't know what! (*Looks at JOHNS suspiciously*)

JOHNS. No, sir; how should you? (*NETTLETON, who has started to drink, chokes on same*)

I'm very sorry to see you so. (NETTLETON *puts his hands over his ears*. JOHNS *takes the atomizer from his pocket and sprays* NETTLETON's *right arm and shoulder*) Especially as your splendid work in the Eureka Digestive Pill Co. is partially on my account. (*Replaces the atomizer in his pocket*) And so I hope I don't offend you, sir, in offering a suggestion. No? Thank you. Then, since you *are* so overworked, why not run off somewhere for a little trip—and rest—for a week or two?

NETTLETON. (*Jumps to his feet*) What's that?

JOHNS. Oh, of course, I mean, sir—that you—you would take *her* with you.

NETTLETON. (*Struggling with his fury*) Oh, you *do*. Then let me tell you one thing, Mr. Johns, and I want you to remember it; my personal and domestic affairs are *not* mentioned in that contract!

JOHNS. There is nothing in it to the contrary! (*Takes out the contract, starts to open it*)

NETTLETON. (*Pushing his hand aside*) There is in *this* house and there's going to be—from now on! Get me?

JOHNS. Yes, sir. I've got you. (*Grins*; NETTLETON *waves his arms in despair and goes reeling to the door* R. I. JOHNS *puts the contract back in his pocket*) And whenever you can think of any *other* little matter that would please you, I trust that you will bring it to my attention.

NETTLETON. There are several little matters I am going to bring to your attention, and if you don't look sharp, the first will be an *undertaker*.

JOHNS. (*With finger tips together*) Yes, sir. Very good, sir. (NETTLETON *gives a shout of rage and exits* R. I. *slams the door after him*. JOHNS *laughs heartily, he goes c. and as he sings "Somebody else" very softly, he takes out the veil, holds it in front of him with his left hand, and with his right he takes the atomizer and sprays the veil up*

and down, keeping time to his singing; puts the atomizer back in his pocket when he has sprayed it thoroughly—or rather appeared to do so—and takes the veil and in time to the song stuffs it in NETTLETON'S overcoat pocket (coat on chair L. of table R.) then takes a sheet of paper from NELLIE'S writing case on the table R., holds it up to view of the house) A letter! (Runs to the settee L., sits down when NETTLETON enters R. He kisses the letter)

NETTLETON. (*Enters from R. I, sees JOHNS kiss the letter, runs above the table R. to C.*) Well? What's that? (JOHNS jumps, pretends alarm, rushes to the fireplace, puts the letter behind him) Don't you hear me speaking to you? What is it?

JOHNS. (*Throwing the letter in the fire*) It is one of the personal or domestic affairs—not mentioned in the contract.

NETTLETON. (*Furiously, as he strides towards him*) Well, by—

JOHNS. (*Sharply*) Hold on there! (*As NETTLETON reaches the edge of the table and pauses, JOHNS speaks with the air of a servant again*) Remember, sir, that any excessive violence on the part of the master might be legally construed as a violation of the contract. Do you get me?

NETTLETON. Yes, I get you—and I'm going to get you by the neck! (*He starts up around the table after JOHNS, who goes to the down-stage side of the table L.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Appears on the stairs*) George! (NETTLETON stops and goes R. MRS. NETTLETON comes rapidly down the stairs to C.) Why—why, you looked as though you were going to fly at each other's throats. What is it, George?

JOHNS. (*Virtuously*) Believe me, Nellie, it was not his fault. Merely a little nervous strain, from overwork, at the office. (*Exits L. I*)

MRS. NETTLETON. Oh! George dear, why *were* you so late at the office?

NETTLETON. (*Goes above the table R. to C. Speaks vehemently*) I'll tell you why—because I'm doing two men's work! *Because the entire business is resting on my shoulders! Does anybody appreciate that? No! I toil and slave and sweat—ten hours a day—and that smirking lump of laziness—is prancing around with a dinky little feather duster.* (*Goes to the R. of the table R., groaning*) My God, Nellie, it makes me sick—*sick!*

MRS. NETTLETON. Well, you *told* him to do it, didn't you? (NETTLETON *waves a protesting hand at MRS. NETTLETON and goes up R. holding his head*) In fact you *gave* him the duster—on his birthday!

NETTLETON. (*Angrily*) That's it! Take up for *him*—as you *always* do!

(MRS. NETTLETON *goes to L. of the table R.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*In severe tone*) And why *shouldn't* I defend him? Someone should! Isn't the poor fellow doing everything on earth to please you?

NETTLETON. (*Loses all control of himself; lifts his clenched fists; laughs maniacally*) Ah-h-h—! To please me! (*Starts around the table R. to L. of same to MRS. NETTLETON's who beats a hasty retreat to the R. side of the table; watches NETTLETON as if she thought he had suddenly gone insane*) Yes, he is! He's pleasing me—every minute of the day and night! And so are *you*. And now, Mrs. Nettleton, I want to know why and what you are writing to that man!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Amazed*) I? *What* man?

NETTLETON. (*In biting sarcasm*) What man! T! T! T Boggs Johns! (*Strikes the table with his fist*) That's the man I mean and you know it! (*Seeking to control his feelings he rushes to the stairs and turns his back to the house; grasps the newel post right side of the stairs and leans his head on same*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Leaning over the table; calling to him in a soothing voice*) Why, darling! You are nervous. Why in the world should I write to T when I have him here all day long and can tell him what I choose?

NETTLETON. (*With a wild cry, whirls about and faces her, laughing fiendishly*) All right! Have it that way? What are you saying to him all day long and what is he saying to you? (*As she stares at him in pained wonder*) That's it—look innocent! I'm the goat—not you! (*Waves arms excitedly, goes up-stage, leans on the L. stage newel post*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*In alarm*) My precious George you're not yourself! You need a rest! (*Brightly, as the idea comes to her*) Now, why don't you run off somewhere—for a week or two?

NETTLETON. (*Whirls and faces her with a blood-curdling cry, goes a few steps to her, points an accusing finger at her*) Aha! You too! (*Points to L.*) That's what he wanted me to do—to get me out of the way! (*Raging*) Now then! I want to know what it means—do you hear me? (*Goes to her, takes her by the arms, and pulls her to c.*) Now look me in the face and tell me—if you can.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Catches the scent of the perfume; leans over and sniffs at his sleeve; sharply*) George! (*Sniffs again energetically.* NETTLETON looks and sniffs too) George! (*She steps back and looks at him*)

NETTLETON. (*A bewildered expression crossing his face*) Well? What are you getting at?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Catches his arm, holds it up for him to smell. In accusing voice*) Your coat sleeve! Smell it!

NETTLETON. (*Goes down-stage, puts his arm up to his nose, smells it; looks puzzled; addresses the house*) Why? My co— Hm, by Jove! That is funny. I wonder where I got it?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Stiffly*) That's what I want to know. *Where* did you get it?

NETTLETON. (*Defensively*) How can I tell. It must have been here—(*Sniffing*) I've been noticing something for the last five minutes.

MRS. NETTLETON. I should think you might; you're positively reeking with it. (*Few steps R., turns, draws herself up*) Now, sir, where have you been?

NETTLETON. Been? Why—why—just where I said I've been—just—

MRS. NETTLETON. Stop! Don't make it worse by lying!

NETTLETON. Nellie! (*Reproachfully*) That's a nice raw deal to hand a poor tired business man.

MRS. NETTLETON. Poor tired business man!

NETTLETON. —When he comes home. If you don't think I've been working, there's the telephone—why didn't you call me up and find out?

MRS. NETTLETON. I did twice and Central always said, "Office doesn't answer."

NETTLETON. (*Faltering*) Oh, I—well—er—well, that may be too. (*As if he had just thought of it*) Oh, that's so; our 'phone has been out of order. (*As MRS. NETTLETON laughs derisively*) Then *don't* believe me! If you like, I *wasn't* there! If that suits you better, I haven't *been* to the office for a week. (*Goes up c.*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*As she goes to the 'phone*

on the table L.) Aha! At last we are getting at the truth! Well, I know a 'phone that is *not* out of order. (*Picks up the 'phone, puts receiver to ear*)

NETTLETON. (*Down-stage to R. of the table R.*) And what are you doing now?

MRS. NETTLETON. Calling up my lawyer—Mr. Vanderholt. (*In 'phone*) Hello!

NETTLETON. Then save yourself the trouble—he'll be here in about five minutes.

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Replaces the 'phone on table, goes to the settee; sits*) Very well! I'll see him. (*Beginning to cry*) And I want you to know, sir, that this is the end—of everything! (*Screams*) Every-y-y-y thing!

NETTLETON. (*Starts to come to her*) Oh, but darling—(*'Phone rings twice. NETTLETON jerks the receiver off the hook; demands harshly*) Hello! What? No! I didn't call. Ring off!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Sobbing and feeling in her sleeves and bosom of dress for handkerchief*) Where's my handkerchief? I've lost it—I've lost it!

NETTLETON. Here, dear; take mine— Here we are! (*Goes to his overcoat on the chair L. of the table R., fumbles in the pocket for his handkerchief but keeps his eye on MRS. NETTLETON. Gives the veil a jerk and runs to MRS. NETTLETON a few steps before he discovers what it really is; stops and tries to stuff it down inside his coat; it hangs out at the bottom; he pulls it up and it sticks out at the top; he keeps this up, laughing foolishly*)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Turns, sees the veil, rises, screams*) Ah! Her veil!

NETTLETON. Her veil? Whose veil?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Pulling the veil away from him; waves it under his nose*) Smell it! (*As NETTLETON steps back, sniffing his coat in comparison, she flings herself in the chair L. of the table R., laughing and sobbing*)

NETTLETON. (*Runs to her, kneels L. of her*) Nellie! Nellie! For heaven's sake don't—don't—(*She continues; he starts for the 'phone; as he reaches it and is about to pick it up, it stops; he crawls back to MRS. NETTLETON. All this done on his knees*) Darling! Speak to me! Nellie! Won't you even look at me? (*She continues to sob and weep. As the 'phone rings NETTLETON turns, shakes his fist at it*) That's it—go on! Damn you—go on!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*In a bitter wail*) And now you're cursing me—e—e—e—e!

NETTLETON. (*Shouts to make himself heard*) I'm not cursing you. I'm cursing the 'phone. I'm——

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Weeping and wailing*) And now you're putting it on the poor old telephone.

NETTLETON. (*Puts hand to head as knock is heard at door*) Oh, my God! There's something else. (*Clasps hands; looks up*) Why don't the house catch fire and finish it! (*MRS. NETTLETON sobs louder. JOHNS enters from L. I, takes in the situation, grins, dances on his way to the door U. R. JOHNS exits*) Nellie! Nellie! You are only making a fool of yourself. I don't know a *thing* about that smell. I swear it—not a thing! Oh, don't! Please! Please!

JOHNS. (*Re-enters at once. Announces VANDERHOLT as he reaches C., then goes to the door L.*) Mr. Vanderholt!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Speaking in natural voice*) Whom did he say it was?

NETTLETON. It's only Van, dear—just dear old Van!

(*MRS. NETTLETON lapses into hysteria again.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*VANDERHOLT enters up R. Reg-*

isters his alarm, takes off hat and coat, goes down-stage R. of the table R.; looks at NELLIE) George! What is it—is she ill?

JOHNS. Something, I fancy, has disagreed with her.

NETTLETON. (*Crawls a few steps toward JOHNS, shakes fist; yells*) You get out of here!

(VANDERHOLT goes up to the window seat, puts his hat and coat there, then comes down c.)

JOHNS. Yes, sir; very good, sir. (*Exit L. 1*)

VANDERHOLT. Now, old man, what is it?

NETTLETON. (*On his knees*) Everything! And I'm supposed to dress with one hand—(*MRS. NETTLETON shrieks*) and treat a case of hysteria with the other. (*NETTLETON rises*) We've got to get her out of here! Help me, will you? Take her head; it's the lightest part of her!

(VANDERHOLT takes her head while NETTLETON takes her feet.)

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Screams and cries until carried off*) I want a divorce—e-e-e—absolute—with alimon—e-e-e—

VANDERHOLT. (*Pulls up to the stairs*) Upstairs?

NETTLETON. (*Pulls to the R.*) No! We'd bump her on the bannisters! Library—come on!

CODDLES. (*Enters from L., sees the row; wrings her hands*) Ho Lud! Ho Lud! Ho Lud! Ho Lud!

NETTLETON. You, Coddles, stop that, and open the library door! (*CODDLES runs to the door R. 1, opens same. NETTLETON and VANDERHOLT carry MRS. NETTLETON out screaming—she kicks off her shoe as she is going out and CODDLES gets it. NET-*

TELTON *returns at once and she hands it to him. While MRS. NETTLETON is being carried off, JOHNS enters from L., goes up and sits on the steps; laughs*) Coddles, telephone a doctor!

CODDLES. (*Excited*) Yes, sir—wot number?

NETTLETON. Six five Columbus. Hurry! (*Exits into library; sounds of hysteria coming out and ceasing as he closes the door*)

CODDLES. Yes, sir! Yes, sir! (*She starts for the 'phone, sees JOHNS on the steps, runs for him. JOHNS registers alarm and dashes out L., slams the door. CODDLES just at the door as it is slammed; she repeats the number that NETTLETON has given her, over and over again, as fast as possible, as though trying to prevent it leaving her; goes to the 'phone, then takes the receiver off the hook with right hand and leans her left elbow on the table, crosses her feet, speaks as though all out of breath*) Are you there? (*She then looks in the 'phone—mouth piece—then out front again*) I say, are you there? Six five Columbius—(*The operator does not get it*) Colum-bi-us!

NETTLETON. *Enters from R. I, goes to C. by way of above the table R. Excitedly, to CODDLES, who has just dropped the 'phone on the table on his entrance and runs down L.; faces NETTLETON*) Well, well—did you get him?

CODDLES. No, sir. 'E slammed the door in me face, sir!

NETTLETON. (*Makes a fierce face—roars at her*) Who? The doctor?

CODDLES. (*Frightened*) No, sir—Mr. Boggs, sir.

NETTLETON. (*Looks at her for a few seconds in helpless fury. He holds on the table, and crouches watching her—CODDLES crouches slightly, as if ready to run, if NETTLETON should spring at her*) Oh, you idiot! Here! Go in there to your

mistress—she needs you! (CODDLES goes, in long glides, still watching NETTLETON) Don't skate—walk!

CODDLES. (*As she runs for her life out R. I*) Yes, sir! Yes, sir! (*As she exits the sound of hysteria comes from the library. NETTLETON follows her as far as the table R. to R. of same. He turns and sees the frame of cards on the table R. and with a sweep of his hand knocks it up-stage, then he goes to table L., takes the syphon, sits on the settee, rubs it on his forehead*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Enters from R. I, sounds of hysteria heard until the door closes. VANDERHOLT comes to C.*) Now, old man, what's all this silly rubbish about divorce?

NETTLETON. Well, I—I got some cologne or something on my shoulder. I don't know where, of course, but nothing under the sun can persuade the lady that the head of some *other* lady has not been reposing *here*. (*Rises, goes to him, holds up his lapel*) Whiff that!

VANDERHOLT. (*Smelling the sleeve and stepping back*) Shades of the chorus! (*Laughs, crosses to R. of the table R. Sits*) Georgie! Georgie!

NETTLETON. (*Angrily*) Well? What's the matter with you? (*Sniffs coat*) Woman, hell! Smells more like the Chicago River! (*As VANDERHOLT laughs*) That's right; laugh; make a game of it; enjoy yourself! Howl! (*Turns away, then back*) But see here, Van! *You* understand it, don't you?

VANDERHOLT. Oh, yes, I understand it! Oh, Georgie! Georgie! (*Laughs*)

NETTLETON. You believe me, don't you? (*As VANDERHOLT laughs again NETTLETON speaks angrily*) Then don't! If you haven't brains enough to understand it, here's something you *can* understand. I want that contract cancelled.

VANDERHOLT. I thought you thought it great!

NETTLETON. I did until I saw it work—and now I think it's rotten!

VANDERHOLT. (*Rising*) Well, what other reasons have you for wanting it cancelled?

NETTLETON. A hundred and fifty million reasons! First, it isn't legal!

VANDERHOLT. That's what T say. Why isn't it legal?

NETTLETON. Because all the advantage is on *his* side. (VANDERHOLT *laughs and goes a few steps R.*) And the rank injustice falls on *me*. And that won't stand at law!

VANDERHOLT. (*Crosses to c.*) Oh, yes, it will. Yours is a personal agreement between two private individuals; and it *stands—at law!* It *can* be annulled, but only by mutual consent—or by one of the parties breaking it—deliberately.

NETTLETON. All right; I'll break it! I'll fire that fellow—now! (*Crosses to L.*)

VANDERHOLT. Good! And forfeit all your interest in the business.

NETTLETON. (*Stopping short*) Eh? Ah! Then it's a frame-up? (*Advancing angrily*) So that's what you've done to me—tied me up! *Fixed* me! So I can't even *kick* him out! I've got to keep him for a *year!*

VANDERHOLT. That's what you wanted, wasn't it? You're making an excellent butler of him, and since he left the office you are doing twice as well as you were before.

NETTLETON. I'm not! The business is running down. One man can't do it all! (*Crosses to R. a few steps*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Whistling*) Oh, I see! So you want him *back* at the office?

NETTLETON. No, I don't! I want him out of this house! He's a curse! And one way or the other you've got to get me rid of him!

VANDERHOLT. *I must? (Laughs)* On what grounds?

NETTLETON. *Legal grounds. (Goes to VANDERHOLT)* Van,—(*Looks about; then speaks very seriously*) he's in love with Nellie—and she's in love with him.

VANDERHOLT. What! In love with Ne—(*Stops and speaks in disgust*) Oh, George, go out and see a *veterinary!* (*Crosses to L. end of the table L.*)

NETTLETON. It's true! For a week he's been swaggering around here as if he *owned* the place. Drinks my whiskey—smokes my best cigars—and then he's *always* with *her!* (*Both meet c.*) If I come in suddenly, he jumps—a guilty start—and looks like a poisoned sheep. Why, Van, I tell you plainly, man to man.

(*To VANDERHOLT.*)

VANDERHOLT. Sh-h-h-!

JOHNS. (*Comes down the stairs to the first landing*) Er—beg pardon, sir; (*Waves a pair of pink pajamas and a pair of violet pajamas at NETTLETON*) but shall I lay out your—er—violet pajamas or the pink ones?

NETTLETON. Get out of here or I'll lay *you* out. (*Runs for the stairs*)

JOHNS. (*Runs up the stairs and exits—speaking as he goes*) Yes, sir; very good, sir!

NETTLETON. Get that, Van—get that? Did you see him grin-n-n-n-ing at me?

VANDERHOLT. (*Sits settee*) No, he looked to *me* like a highly respectable grave digger.

NETTLETON. (*Goes to c.*) Well, I'll dig his all right—and plant him—in a violet colored shroud. (*Speaking confidentially*) Van, would you believe it, they are writing notes to each other and right under my very nose!

VANDERHOLT. Correspondence? Now you're *talking*. Produce it!

NETTLETON. (*Waving his hands helplessly*) I can't! They burn it!

VANDERHOLT. (*Goes a step L.; laughs*) Good work!

NETTLETON. (*Sharply*) Eh?

VANDERHOLT. I mean—er—how does Mrs. Nettleton seem to bear up under the trying circumstances?

NETTLETON. She? Why, Van, she carries it off with an air of brazen innocence that would knock you cold. When I put it up to her a while ago what do you think she did?

VANDERHOLT. What?

NETTLETON. Just looked at me with those big, beautiful eyes—then attacked me—about that damned cologne. (*Crosses to R.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Laughs heartily*) By Jove, that was clever.

NETTLETON. (*Getting excited again*) Well, it don't go down with *me*. (*Impatiently, to VANDERHOLT*) Now then—what are you going to do about it?

VANDERHOLT. (*Protesting*) I? See here, old sport, you seem to think this is *my* divorce.

NETTLETON. (*Going to c*) Well—you saddled me with Boggs, didn't you?

VANDERHOLT. (*Angrily*) No, I didn't; but still—(*Stops and brightens*) Ha! I've got it—(*Goes to NETTLETON*)

NETTLETON. What?

VANDERHOLT. We'll call T in here and get *him* to dissolve the contract—with *your* magnanimous consent. Get the idea?

NETTLETON. You mean—(*Enthusiastic as he grasps the idea*) Good, by Jupiter! It's great! (*VANDERHOLT goes up-stage and pushes the bell L.*)

of the window seat on the arch) But don't you tell him that I want it, and don't you tell him that business is rotten, either. (*Goes to R. of the table R.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Comes to back of the chair L. of the table R.*) Oh, no, no, you leave it to me. I owe him an uppercut myself.

JOHNS. (*Comes down the stairs to c., stands at attention*) Beg pardon, sir; but did you ring? (*VANDERHOLT snickers*)

NETTLETON. (*Trying to get back*) What did you think it was—the angels calling you?

JOHNS. (*With a sober face; in a sweet voice; looks up at heaven*) No, sir; I used to believe in angels, but somehow lately, sir—

NETTLETON. (*Fiercely*) Aw—shut up! (*Throws himself in the chair R. of the table R. Glares at JOHNS*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Comes to R. of JOHNS*) That's right! Now, T, listen: George and I have been talking matters over and have come to the conclusion that this contract is—well, a little rough on you.

JOHNS. (*Politely*) Yes, sir?

VANDERHOLT. (*Amused at JOHN'S manner*) And so partially at my advice, he has generously consented to—to let you off. (*Watches JOHN'S face closely*)

JOHNS. (*Intentionally misconstruing the meaning*) You mean for a day, sir? (*Smiles gratefully*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Trying to keep a straight face. NETTLETON gives an infuriated grunt and turns in his seat away from JOHNS*) Oh, no, no! (*Earnestly*) I mean altogether. In other words, he's willing—under certain conditions—to allow you to cancel. (*Beams upon JOHNS. NETTLETON tries to look philanthropical*)

JOHNS. (*In respectful astonishment*) What?

Cancel my contract? (*Lifts his hands in deferential protest*) Oh, Mr. Vanderholt!

VANDERHOLT. (*Slaps JOHNS' hand down*) Here, here! Cut that butler stuff; it don't go with me!

JOHNS. (*In natural tone and manner*) All right, I will. And why *should* I cancel it? Isn't George at the office, working his head off, piling up receipts and even improving on the color of my pills? He's doubling the business every week or two—according to *his* account—and is crediting half the profits up to mine. On the other hand—(*Changes tone to one of great satisfaction, walks a few steps L., turns slightly away from VANDERHOLT*) I'm here! (*NETTLETON sits up straight in his seat, with a start; eyes JOHNS keenly*) A regular rest cure snap. Good whiskey—(*Raises his eyebrows and makes a mouth*) fair cigars—(*NETTLETON writhes in his seat*) and—er—er—

NETTLETON. (*Springs to his feet, bangs the table with his fist, and demands in a voice of thunder*) And what?

JOHNS. (*Faces him, smiles sweetly at him; in a mocking tone*) A good, kind, generous, loving marster, who is all my simple soul desires.

(*NETTLETON, with a yell of rage starts for JOHNS, who dances lightly to the door L. 1*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Pushes NETTLETON back*) Steady, George! Leave this to me. (*As NETTLETON stops, VANDERHOLT turns to JOHNS*) Well, T, how about it?

JOHNS. Cancel my contract? What I want to do is *renew* to it. (*Exits L. 1, grinning*)

NETTLETON. (*Nearly collapses, reels to R., then up R. to back of the chair R. of the table R. on which he leans for support. VANDERHOLT chokes with*

mirth. When NETTLETON gets his breath, VANDERHOLT throws himself on settee) Did you ever see such a man? (*VANDERHOLT laughs*) Can you beat *that*? Can you *beat it*? (*Goes to c.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Wiping the tears out of his eyes*) Well, no, old chap! I'm horribly afraid—we can't!

CODDLES. (*Enters from R. I, her hair disarranged. As the door opens MRS. NETTLETON is heard weeping and screaming. Sound stops with the closing of the door. Appears out of breath. Jerks her thumb in the direction of the library, looks up, shakes her head, motions to NETTLETON, then taps her forehead*) Ho, Mr. Nettleton, sir! Mr. Nettleton! She's a-talkin' hon somethink hawful, sir—a-grittin' of 'er teeth an' a-stretchin' hout 'er legs, like this! (*Bares her teeth and holds her legs and arms rigid*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Rises; goes to NETTLETON*) Good Lord! What is it, now?

(CODDLES goes above the table R.)

NETTLETON. Pathetic business for divorce proceedings! For benefit of counsel. (*Opens the door R. I. MRS. NETTLETON heard, hysterical*) Walk in and get a line on it.

(MRS. NETTLETON gives a piercing shriek.)

VANDERHOLT. One minute, George. How about a retainer?

NETTLETON. Retainer? You go in and restrain her. (*VANDERHOLT exits laughing. Closes door. Noise stops*) Coddles, take my advice and remain a maiden! (*Exits R. I. MRS. NETTLETON does not scream this time*)

CODDLES. (*CODDLES looks at NETTLETON'S re-*

treating figure, then slowly falls backward to the floor. At length pulling herself up by means of the table stands looking out front with a dazed expression; pushes the hair back from her face; breathes heavily) Ho dearie me! Ho dearie! Hi'd rather do the cookin' than be a-waitin' h'on a lunnytick! (*Looks L. and R., frightened, as if expecting the "Lunnytick" to put in appearance at any minute*) Hi wonder now, if 'e caught it from 'er, (*Indicates the different parties with jerks of her thumbs*) or hif she caught it from 'im? (*JOHNS dashes on gaily from L. I with a water bottle and a bunch of roses. He skips to R., hums as he goes. CODDLES retreats a step or two up-stage, calls to JOHNS in alarm*) Don't you go in there, Mr. Boggs, sir. Don't you do it! He'll murder you, 'e will! 'E'll bash you on the 'ead, sir. 'E'll—(*JOHNS stops and grins at CODDLES*)

FLORENCE. (*Coming downstairs to first landing*) Coddles! You go back to the kitchen this minute—and let poor Mr. Boggs alone.

(*JOHNS puts the water bag on the table R.*)

CODDLES. (*Backs toward the door L. I*) Now don't you worrit, Miss. Don't you worrit. I wouldn't marry that lubby headed idiot—no, not if 'e was willin'. I ain't a-goin' to spend my 'oney-moon in no bloomin', bally bug 'ouse! (*Exits L. I*)

FLORENCE. (*FLORENCE and JOHNS laugh. FLORENCE comes down C., JOHNS joins her; gives her the roses*) Who were those flowers intended for—Nellie?

JOHNS. Partially. I thought it might please the master if he knew I was *thinking* of her. (*Grins*)

FLORENCE. (*Laughs*) Well, stop thinking of her and think of me.

JOHNS. (*Eagerly*) I am.

FLORENCE. No, no, no—I mean business. (*Puts the flowers on the table*)

JOHNS. (*Puts out his arms to her*) So do I.

FLORENCE. (*Shakes her finger at him*) Yes, but not that kind. T, you've got to make George discharge you.

JOHNS. (*Bitterly*) I can't. The contract won't let him. If he throws me out as an asset I come back as a liability. We nailed him with the cologne, but we didn't clinch it.

(FLORENCE sits on settee.)

FLORENCE. Yes—I see—(*Turns to JOHNS quickly*) Let's have a look at the little trouble maker. (*JOHNS takes the atomizer out of his pocket and hands it to her. She looks at it thoughtfully*) My, my, my—and such a little thing! (*She sprays herself copiously*)

JOHNS. (*Stepping back*) Good Lord, Florence, What are you doing?

FLORENCE. (*Smiles*) I'm trying to become George's little co-respondent. And if this doesn't work I know something else that will.

JOHNS. What?

FLORENCE. It depends on you.

JOHNS. How?

FLORENCE. Are you aware of the fact that not ten minutes after becoming engaged to me, you sat down deliberately and gambled away my chance of being married?

JOHNS. (*Blankly*) Your chances of being married?

FLORENCE. Yes. What do you think I grew up for?

JOHNS. Oh, but Florence, you are wrong. What I forfeited was only myself—and my business.

FLORENCE. (*Looks at him sideways. Smiles*) You don't expect me to marry a butler, do you?

JOHNS. (*Doesn't know just how to take it*) Well, no—I don't! (*Turns to her. Earnestly*) What do you want me to do? If you'll only help me out——

FLORENCE. Ah, that's just the point; like every other man on earth, you go sailing around, on your own account, till you land in the fly paper with all six feet, and then begin buzzing for the lady of the house to help you out. (*As JOHNS looks at her meekly*) And suppose I *do* help you out, suppose I forgive you, as a fool of a woman is always doing! Suppose I put you back in your office where you belong—suppose I do! *That's* the point, Mr. Blood and Brains! What do I get out of it!

JOHNS. (*Solemnly*) Florence—you get anything I own on earth—or ever *hope* to own.

FLORENCE. Be careful, T.

JOHNS. I am. Square my account; first with yourself and then with George, and whatever you say for me to do—I'll do it.

FLORENCE. And if you fail?

JOHNS. (*Stands at attention*) I'll be your butler for the rest of my natural life.

FLORENCE. (*Laughs*) And you'll do what I ask you now?

JOHNS. I will!

FLORENCE. (*Warningly*) Without regard to consequences? You swear?

JOHNS. I swear.

FLORENCE. *On your honor?*

JOHNS. As a gen—(*Looks at FLORENCE, then stands at attention*) As a butler!

FLORENCE. All right! (*Rises, goes to JOHNS, puts hands on his shoulders, rises on tiptoes and whispers in his ear, then steps back, clasps his hands and looks at him*)

JOHNS. (*Happily*) What! You mean it?

FLORENCE. Yes.

JOHNS. Are you sure?

FLORENCE. Of course!

JOHNS. (*Delighted*) *Florence!* (*Goes to her, clasps her wrist*) Then don't try to keep me off this time, because you haven't the strength! (*Takes her to the settee, sits, then pulls her on his knee, hugs her, she protesting*)

FLORENCE. (*Tries to get away, does not make a very great effort*) Don't, T,—don't—please! (*Glances R. and L.*) Er—somebody might come in!

JOHNS. (*Laughing and drawing her close*) Let them; we'll tell them where to go! Come on! Come on! (*She suddenly withdraws her hands and throws her arms about him; they rock from side to side, laughing*)

NETTLETON. (*Enters from R. I, stares at them in amazement; speaks sharply*) Boggs! (*He looks from one to the other severely as they both jump up and face him*) What's the meaning of this?

JOHNS. (*Tauntingly*) It means, sir, (*Goes to the door L. I, turns*) that for the second time in your presence, I was holding my lucky queen! (*Blows a kiss to FLORENCE and exits L. I*)

FLORENCE. (*Banteringly*) Good evening, George! You seem surprised to see me.

NETTLETON. (*Stiffly*) Yes, Miss Cole, I am! You have no right to interfere in this affair, especially in my house! And you have no right to help him out!

FLORENCE. (*Sweetly*) No? And what are you going to do about it? (*Smiles at him*)

NETTLETON. *Do?* (*Strides towards her*) I'll tell you what I'm—(*He leans towards her and catches the scent of the perfume, stops back and loses his dignity, laughs foolishly, goes to the door R. I, catches hold of the knob, pulls on it as if to prevent anyone coming out, watches FLORENCE distrustfully*)

FLORENCE. Why don't you do it, George? (*As he continues to look at her suspiciously,—innocently as she smiles sweetly at him*) Why, what is it?

NETTLETON. (*Laughing nervously*) Ha, ha, nothing—only—ha, ha, well, you see—Nellie——

FLORENCE. Oh yes, I know, T told me she was in the library—(*Starts to R.*) I'll run right in and see her.

NETTLETON. (*Comes a few steps towards her, stands in front of her, cannot conceal his agitation, looks behind him as though fearing NELLIE would enter, and tries to keep his eye on FLORENCE too*) Oh, no, please! I—er—wouldn't! Not just now! She's not at all well, Florence; in fact, she's ill—and won't be able to appear at dinner. (*Passes his handkerchief over his forehead*)

FLORENCE. (*Pretending sympathy*) Ah! Too bad! What seems to be the trouble?

NETTLETON. Er—nerves!

FLORENCE. (*Looking at him steadily*) Nerves! Good gracious! I thought the trouble was with her nose.

NETTLETON. (*His surprise overcoming his other emotions*) Eh? (*Goes to her, looks at her suspiciously*) And what do you know about it?

FLORENCE. A lot! (*Seriously*) Now, look here, George, how much would you give to get out of this mess—entirely?

NETTLETON. You mean—all of it—Boggs included?

FLORENCE. Boggs included, *here*. But suppose I put him back in his office, where you need him as badly as he needs you. Suppose I do *that*, Mr. Bone and Fat—what is it worth—to *me*?

NETTLETON. (*Solemnly*) Florence—I'd give a thousand dollars—cold. Yes, fifteen hundred, by Jupiter! I'd give *two* thousand——

FLORENCE. (*Laughing*) There, there, there! Stop bidding against yourself. I'll take your first offer of a thousand—in the form of a little wedding present—and here's a little something to keep you from forgetting it. (*Sprays the cologne in his face, starts out R. I., as VANDERHOLT enters, she sprays him also, and exits*)

NETTLETON. (*Stands sniffing his coat sleeve, then where FLORENCE has sprayed the cologne. VANDERHOLT sniffs the cologne on him, then VANDERHOLT and NETTLETON look at each other and nod*) Boggs! I knew it! Boggs! That poisonous scorpion—that wart—that toad—that grinning, chuckling, chattering ape. (*Doubles his fists and starts L.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Crosses to c.*) Say, George—(*As NETTLETON turns and looks at him*) did you notice a similarity between the perfume Florence is using and the one on your coat?

NETTLETON. (*Going to VANDERHOLT*) Yes I did! And that devil in there is responsible for it. That stump-tailed serpent—that—(*Goes toward the door L. I., with fists clenched; trying to get a suitable name for JOHNS*)

VANDERHOLT. Who—T?

NETTLETON. (*Comes back to c. to explain it to VANDERHOLT*) He's gone beyond his contract this time and I'm going to sue him for damages! (*Starts L. again*) And I'm going to damage him before the suit. I'm——

VANDERHOLT. Here! Cut that! I'm the referee in this affair—you leave it to me—I'll straighten you out.

NETTLETON. (*Comes rapidly back to VANDERHOLT. In angry complaining voice*) Straighten me out? Me? Don't you know yet which one of us is the crook? And if you can't get him legally——

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Her voice heard a second before she enters R. 1*) Where is he? (*Enters from R. 1, goes to L. NETTLETON makes a dash for the stairs. VANDERHOLT runs above the table R.*) Where is he? George! Come back here; I don't mean you. I mean T Johns. How dared he do such a thing to you and to me? Where is he?

NETTLETON. (*Gaining courage when he finds it's not he. Comes down of the stage a bit*) Ah! Of course that's different. How dared he?

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Throws the door L. 1 open; calls*) T Johns! T Johns! Come here!

VANDERHOLT. (*Goes to her; tries to pacify her*) Nellie—please—if you'd only——

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Turns on him furiously. VANDERHOLT retreats quickly to R. of the table L. MRS. NETTLETON follows to front of the settee, scolding*) And you, Mr. Vanderholt, I never understood before that you were at the bottom of all this trouble.

(NETTLETON comes down on a line with them.)

VANDERHOLT. (*Bewildered*) I?

MRS. NETTLETON. Yes, you!

NETTLETON. (*From R. of VANDERHOLT. Glad to have some one to blame*) Yes, you!

(VANDERHOLT looks at him reproachfully. Tries to explain but they don't give him a chance.)

MRS. NETTLETON. When our two boys were getting along so happily and peacefully——

NETTLETON. (*Vigorously echoes MRS. NETTLETON in hope of squaring himself*) And peacefully——

MRS. NETTLETON. Then you stepped in and upset everything!

NETTLETON. (*Waving his arms*) Everything!

(VANDERHOLT looks first at one and then the other as they address him, with the result that his head turns from side to side very quickly.)

MRS. NETTLETON. And you did it on purpose——

NETTLETON. With malice aforethought! (NETTLETON goes up C. to the stairs)

MRS. NETTLETON. Just to charge them legal fees.

VANDERHOLT. (*Protesting*) Oh, now, Nellie; don't! (FLORENCE enters R. 1, stands in front of the table R.) They had been going it for two years before I came in. Miss Florence knows that. I leave it to *her*. Now am I the one to be made responsible? (*Crosses to R. C.*)

FLORENCE. (*Goes to VANDERHOLT, shakes finger at him; severely*) You are!

MRS. NETTLETON. There! I *knew* it!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Goes to VANDERHOLT, scolding; she is followed by FLORENCE, who is followed by NETTLETON. They back VANDERHOLT to above the table R., then down R. to the door R. 1, leaving MRS. NETTLETON above the table R., FLORENCE next her, just left of MRS. NETTLETON, and NETTLETON left of FLORENCE. All speak at once until CODDLES enters*) It was perfectly horrid of you; my innocent husband, who called you his best friend; and poor old T!

VANDERHOLT. (*With the rest, holds hands in front of him as he backs away*) I tell you it wasn't my fault. I was only trying to teach them a valuable lesson they both needed.

FLORENCE. (*At the same time*) You knew all the time just what sort of a row you were stirring up and deserve everything that's coming to you.

NETTLETON. (*Chimes in*) You saddled me with Boggs! You did it deliberately. You knew in advance just what he'd do to me.

VANDERHOLT. (*Raises his voice above the rest*) Here! Here! Stop it! Will you stop it!

(*CODDLES comes on from L. 1 with a tray and five cocktails, places tray on the table, and tries to get out L. 1 without being observed. She wears a little cap, which is on one side.*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Continues rapidly*) I never knew a poor devil yet who didn't get in trouble when he tried to help his friends! Now, as for all this useless row——

NETTLETON. (*As CODDLES is about to slip out, shouts*) Coddles! (*CODDLES gives a violent start and stops, faces NETTLETON, shaking*) What's this? Why isn't Boggs serving those cocktails?

CODDLES. (*Her knees knocking against each other; speaks in a high nervous voice*) 'E arsked me to do it for 'im, sir!

NETTLETON. (*Raises his voice angrily*) Oh! He did!

FLORENCE. Don't get excited, George!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*At the same time*) Darling, please!

NETTLETON. (*Waves at them to be quiet—speaks sarcastically*) What else did the boss of the establishment have to say?

CODDLES. (*Measuring the distance to the door L. with her eye; swallows*) 'E said to tell you, sir, that if you didn't like it—you could charge 'im up with another hundred and go to 'ell—(*Exits L. 1*)

NETTLETON. (*Stands; clenches his fists and swears silently at BOGGS*) All right; we'll see about it! (*Gets up and presses the push button*)

MRS. NETTLETON. George! What are you doing now?

NETTLETON. I'm ringing for Boggs; if he don't come in, I'm going after him and *bring him in!* (BOGGS *appears on the stairs in dress clothes; comes down the stairs to c.*) *Boggs!* (Goes down R.) You see him, Van; he's quitting! He's breaking his contract. He's——

JOHNS. (*Comes down c., takes out the contract*) I want to tell you something about that contract!

NETTLETON. (*Meets JOHNS c.*) Yes, and I want to tell you something about that contract!

JOHNS and NETTLETON. (*Pointing at each other; holding up the contracts and glaring at each other*) It is stated in that contract——

FLORENCE. (*Laughs; speaks briskly*) Here, here, here—stop it! There isn't any contract!

(NETTLETON and JOHNS look at her and an expression of joy overspreads their features.)

NETTLETON. (*Almost shouting for joy*) What?

JOHNS. (*At the same time, same tone*) What's that?

FLORENCE. (*Beaming on them; brightly*) There never was any contract!

VANDERHOLT. (*Sharply, as he goes quickly to the side of NETTLETON. MRS. NETTLETON comes down R.*) Why not!

FLORENCE. (*Looks steadily at VANDERHOLT*) To begin with, it wasn't legal! (*All look at VANDERHOLT*)

VANDERHOLT. (*Crosses front of NETTLETON to side of FLORENCE; NETTLETON goes up-stage of VANDERHOLT to MRS. NETTLETON; they smile hopefully at each other*) And why wasn't it legal?

FLORENCE. (*As all watch them intently, FLORENCE speaks swiftly, earnestly, and to the point*) Because the contract, fundamentally, was based on a game of poker. Now, poker is gambling—(*Slight*

pause—all register—FLORENCE raises her voice triumphantly) and gambling is illegal!

NETTLETON. (*Wild with joy, raises his voice to stop FLORENCE*) Eh?

JOHNS. (*Same time with NETTLETON*) Oh!

MRS. NETTLETON. (*Same time with JOHNS and NETTLETON, with a great sigh of relief*) George!

VANDERHOLT. Look here, Miss Florence, I knew that; but how in the name of glory did you know?

FLORENCE. I asked a lawyer! A real one! (*All burst into laughter; VANDERHOLT goes up-stage laughing above the table L. to L. of same, then down L. to front of the settee*) You boys had a real business and you've made a farce of it, but now if you have the real stuff in you, you can make it a real success.

NETTLETON and JOHNS. How? (*They come close to FLORENCE*)

FLORENCE. (*Quickly, as she smiles at them*) It's like your digestive pill—depending on which is the more important—the outside or the inside.

NETTLETON. (*Nods his head at JOHNS; speaks emphatically*) It's partially the outside!

JOHNS. (*With spirit*) It's partially the inside! (*The partners speak together, each giving the other the credit. This should be a repetition of their big quarrel scene in the first, as they ad lib, each one, tries to top the other in voice until FLORENCE stops them*)

FLORENCE. (*Breaks in, holds up her hand for quiet*) It's the combination! (*Puts their hands together, goes back of JOHNS to L. of him*)

JOHNS. (*Laughs heartily as a thought strikes him*) Say, George; what I said about Van still goes.

NETTLETON. (*Laughs lightly in anticipation*) What's that?

JOHNS. (*Laughs*) He's a hell of a lawyer!

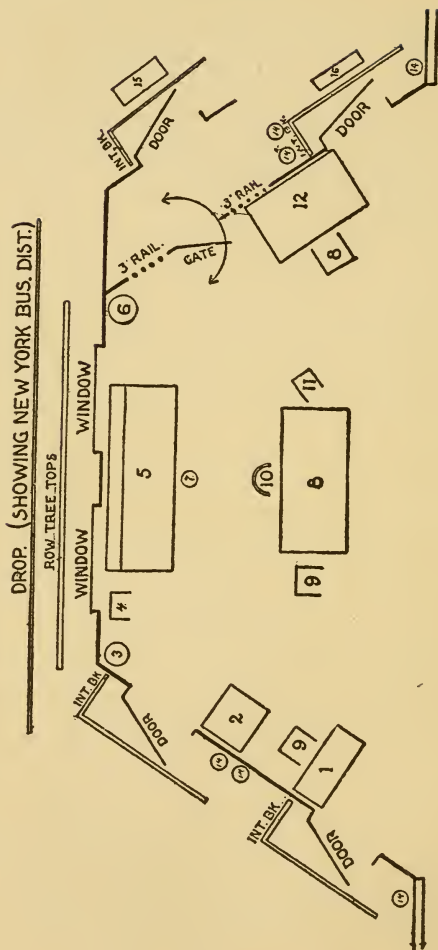
(VANDERHOLT *sits on the settee; laughs.*)

CURTAIN.

(*Second Curtain*—NETTLETON *hands* MRS. NETTLETON *cocktail. They drink. JOHNS puts ring on FLORENCE'S finger. VANDERHOLT pours drink.*)

A PAIR OF SIXES

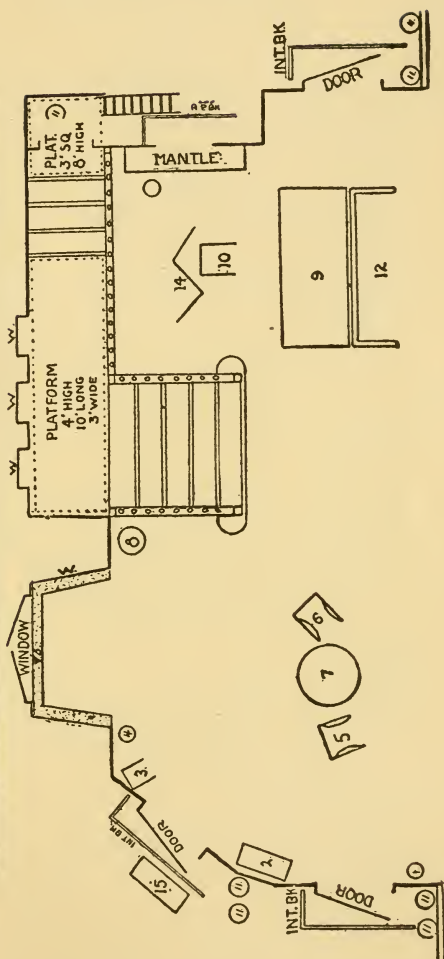
ACT. I



A PAIR OF SIXES

ACTS II AND III

DROP (SHOWING RESIDENTIAL NEW YORK CITY-)



DRESS

T. BOGGS JOHNS: ACT 1ST.

Business suit.

Derby.

Flower in button hole.

Clothes of a sporty character.

ACT 2ND.

Wears side whiskers

Butler's uniform, LARGE brass buttons.

ACT 3RD.

Quick change to dress suit just before the finish
of the Act.

GEORGE NETTLETON: ACT 1ST.

Business suit.

ACT 2ND.

Cut-away coat.

Silk hat, striped trousers, cane, gloves, and etc.

During the act makes quick change to Tuxedo.

His smoking jacket and slippers are on stage
when he makes his entrance. (*See prop-
erty plot for information of above*)

ACT 3RD.

Business suit.

Soft hat. (This hat is kicked about)

Overcoat. (A handkerchief to be in the inside
pocket of this coat)

T. J. VANDERHOLT: ACT 1ST.

Business suit.

Derby, gloves and etc.

ACT 2ND.

Tuxedo.

Overcoat.

Soft hat, and etc.

ACT 3RD.

Business suit.

TONY TOLER: ACT 1ST.

Business suit, cane, flashily dressed, *flower in button-hole and etc.*

MR. APPLGATE: ACT 1ST.

Prince Albert.

Striped trousers.

Silk hat.

Flower in button-hole.

Cane.

Gray hair.

KROME: ACT 1ST.

Business suit.

JIMMY: ACT 1ST.

Boy's suit.

Loud shirt and tie.

SHIPPING CLERK: ACT 1ST.

Shirt Sleeves.

FLORENCE COLE: ACT 1ST.

Walking skirt.

Everything smart and up to the minute.

ACT 2ND.

Traveling suit.

ACT 3RD.

Evening dress.

Cape, gloves, and etc.

MRS. NETTLETON: ACT 1ST.

Tailor made suit, gloves and etc.

ACT 2ND.

Change of dress.

During the act change is made to evening dress.

Time for change *twelve minutes.*

ACT 3RD.

Change of evening dress.

CODDLES: ACT 2ND and 3RD.

Maid's costume, cap and etc.

Extra large pair of shoes that turn up at the toe:

SALLY PARKER: ACT 1ST.

Smart little dress.

White waist.

Sleeve protectors, of paper.

SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOT

ACT I

SCENE REPRESENTS:

Offices of The Eureka Digestive Pill Company,
New York.

Main Entrance to office U. L. *door.*

Small rail and swinging gate are next passed to
enter.

Door, L. I to private office of "T. BOGGS
JOHNS," whose name appears in large let-
ters on the ground glass, which occupies
upper half of door.

Door, U. R. to "STOCK ROOM," which is
lettered on ground glass on upper half of
door.

Door, R. I to private office of "GEORGE B.
NETTLETON," which appears lettered on
ground glass.

Through the two windows at the back appear
views of skyscrapers and tree-tops on the
back drop.

Green shades on the windows.

OAK panels to height of about 5 ft. about
room. Wall paper above—a tone of yellow.

On the R. wall, two pictures—unframed—of the
partners.

Between the pictures just above the wainscot-
ing, is an advertisement of the Pill they are
"pushing." Calendar on the wall. Above
the partners is a large map of "U. S."

Rear wall at c. is Pill Adv. Calendar.

On the L. wall, is large clock. A framed picture of President Wilson. A Pill advertisement. Ground cloth down to represent polished floor.

NUMBERS ON GROUND PLAN REPRESENT.

1. *Typewriter desk, with typewriter, swivel chair.*

ON DESK.—Plenty of typewriting paper, telegraph blanks, carbon paper. Stenographer's pad, pencils, ink rubber. Letter file. Spindle file, with papers stuck on it. Many sheets of paper on the front of the desk, typed and with envelopes on the tops of the sheets, all laid in a row.

2. *Mahogany letter cabinet.*

ON CABINET.—Three (3) cardboard letter files.

3. *Water Cooler.* Glass for same.

4. *Chair.* Cane seat.

5. *Book-keeper's High Desk.* (Cherry)

ON TOP SHELF OF DESK.—Wire letter rack filled with letters and papers. Ledger. A large piece of cardboard the size of a newspaper, with the adv. section of a N. Y. paper pasted on one side. In the center of the paper is pasted a violet colored advertisement of the virtues of the coloring of NETTLETON and JOHNS' PILL. Size about 4 ft. x 5 ft. (This is referred to in the play as "the dummy." Ledger and letter files.)

ON REAR OF DESK.—Wire rack filled with violet color pill boxes. Six (6) letter files all along the rear of the desk.

ON THE DESK PROPER.—Large blotter. Ink-stand, two (2) bottles of ink in same, one red and other black. Pen rack and pens. Blot- ters and erasers. Large ledger on c. of desk, open with several printed slips in same.

Spindle file R. with bunch of papers stuck on it. Telephone on the L. of desk. Two (2) N. Y. Telephone books hang by a cord on the L. side of desk. Waste paper basket underneath desk half filled.

"A. D. T." Call, on the wall between desk and door R.

6. *Brass Hat Rack.*
7. *High Stool.* (Cherry)
8. *Large six foot Mahogany Desk* (Flat top).

ON DESK.—A large blotter with brass corners, at c. Ink-well, stand for same. Pen rack and pens. Match stand and matches. (One match to be fixed in the stand so that it is higher than the rest in order that it can be drawn out quickly by NETTLETON). Ash receiver. Bottle of library paste, with water well and brush. On the R. up-stage side of the desk, a wire rack filled with violet pill boxes full of violet pills. (These boxes to be about the size that hold 50 pills and the pills are colored bans.) On the L. up-stage side of the desk, is a ledger. Space open for pack of playing cards.

CARDS FIXED.—At the bottom of the deck is placed the six of diamonds, on top of this is the Queen of Hearts, then the six of hearts, then seven cards of any suit, but small denomination, after which is a nine, a three, an eight, the King of Hearts, the Jack of Hearts, the Ace of Hearts, and the four of spades, on top of these the rest of the deck. An elastic around the deck. They are placed back of the ledger, out of sight of the audience. "Krome" changes another pack of them later in the act. Some mail on the c. of desk and a letter opener.

9. *Mahogany chair.* (Office)
8. *Mahogany chair.* (Office)

- 10. *Mahogany chair.* (Office)
- 11. *Mahogany chair.* (Office)
- 12. *Mahogany Desk.* (Roll Top)

ON DESK.—Ledger, open, with a few letters inside. Ink-stand. Ink-well. Pens, paper, twelve inch rule, mail, a letter for "Krome" to give "Jimmy."

ON TOP OF DESK.—Three stacks of Pills, pyramid form.

- 14. *Kitchen chairs.* With clean sheets on them.
- 15. *Prop table.*
- 16. *Rosin board.*

SIDE PROPS

ON TABLE No. 15.

FOR "JOHNS".—Two bank books. Ring box containing ring set with two diamonds and a ruby.

FOR "NETT".—A N. Y. newspaper.

FOR "JIMMY".—Two letters, one ad., to "Sally", other to "Krome". A package for "Krome."

FOR "KROME".—Box of cigars full of wooden ones, and two real ones.

ON CHAIR, L. 1.—A pack of playing cards to be sent to "Krome's" room, cards to match those on the c. desk.

ON CHAIR, R. 1. FOR "JIMMY".—A box of cigars, two good ones, the rest wooden. The two good cigars in this box must be a different shape from those in the box L. 1.

FOR "NETT".—A bank cheque.

ACTS II and III

SCENE REPRESENTS:

Home of Mr. Nettleton. New York City.

Woodwork is WHITE.

Stairs. The hand rails are mahogany, treads, white.

On the walls in panels, satin damask.

Large oil painting over the mantel L., in shadow box, gold frame.

ON MANTEL.—Bronze clock. A bronze candlestick at each end. Two photos in bronze frames.

IN FIREPLACE.—Brass Andirons. On same firelog, with light inside.

BY FIREPLACE.—Fire tools above F. P.

Stairs U. C. lead off L. Red carpet on stairs.

Window and window seat U. R. On the windows are silk curtains of a brown tone, and lace curtains.

The windows on the stairs have red plush curtains on brass rods, and a view of the street can be seen.

On arch U. R. are large red curtains—plush—on brass rod.

Red carpet covers the stage.

1. *Console table* (Adams) Vase of carnations, two books, pictures, silver frames, doilie.
2. *Small table*. Doilie, vase of flowers, magazines.
3. *Adams chair*.
4. *Small "pie crust" table*. Doilie. Silver tray. China tray. China pitcher. Sugar bowl. Cup and saucer. Spoons. Cream pitcher.
5. *Arm chair*. (Large)
6. *Arm chair*.
7. *Adams table*. Two books. Ivory paper knife.
8. *Small table*. Doilie. Four books. Lamp.
9. *Adams table*. (Glass cover) Doilie. Pictures in silver frames. TELEPHONE. Lamp. Two eve. papers (N. Y. papers)
10. *Adams chair*.

11. *Kitchen chairs.* Off-stage.
12. *Settee.*
14. *Screen.*
15. *Prop. table.*
16. *Window seat.* Five pillows. Two pots of flowers. Roses. On the floor in front of window seat, three pillows, two together and one on top of them. "Van's" coat is thrown here by "Johns". Outside of the window is a sheet which catches "Nettleton's" coat when "Johns" throws it outside the window.

JUST ABOVE THE TABLE.—

6. Underneath the stage carpet are placed a couple of quilts to ease "Coddles" fall in the last act.

NOTE:—Furniture referred to is of the "Adam" period.

SIDE PROPS

A backing to be placed off L. for "Nettleton's" change in ACT 2. In backing are two kitchen chairs and sheets, hat rack, and mirror.

ON TABLE 15.—

FOR "JOHNS".—Silver tray, five glasses, decanter of cold tea, syphon. (These glasses are 'high-ball' type.) Small towel.

Wooden tray (handles), two cocktail glasses, painted to look as though they held cocktails. Dust pan, whisk broom.

Brass coal scuttle, half filled with coal, this appearance brought about by false bottom.

Contract for "Johns".

FOR "CODDLES".—Three letters add. to "Johns" in feminine handwriting. A broom on the top landing of stairs.

ON PROP TABLE OFF R.

FOR "NETT".—Cane.

Red book. Small note book. Pencil.

Frame of three cards, two sixes and the Queen of Hearts, the last mentioned card, slightly torn. This frame is wrapped in box and tied with violet ribbon.

Feather duster, wrapped tight.

CONTRACT IN POCKET.

FOR "FLORENCE".—Small black satchel.

FOR "JOHNS".—Slippers ("Nettleton's")

Smoking Jacket.

Bundle of laundry. (Four shirts and six collars)

FOR "MRS. NETT".—Pocket-book, telegram in same. Also mirror and powder puff.

BELL WORKS FROM U. R.

A Small wooden hammer to be placed on chair outside door R. 2., for "Van" to hit the door with.

ACT III

OFF L. I ON PROP TABLE.

FOR "JOHNS".—Tray used on table—4—in Second Act with china.

Wooden tray, five cocktail glasses with cold tea.

Hot water bag, half-filled with hot water.

Bunch of red roses.

Feather duster. (One used in Second Act)

Contract. (Same one as in Act Two)

Fountain pen.

ON TOP LANDING OF STAIRS ON CHAIR.—One pair of violet colored pajamas, and one pair of pink pajamas.

OFF R. ON PROP TABLE.—

FOR "FLORENCE".—An Atomizer, wrapped in paper.

Veil.

FOR "NETTLETON".—Contract used in Act Two ("Nettleton" to keep this).

ON STAGE CHANGES.—Nettleton's slippers to be placed in the fireplace on the fender.

ON TABLE 9.—Portfolio in drawer, in same gray paper. Envelopes. Decanter stands from Act 2; tray, etc.

ON TABLE 6.—Pair of sixes and Queen in frame, on front of table.

Ivory paper knife, and one book.

ON TABLE 2.—Vase from mantel containing the violets used in the second act by "Florence".

IMPORTANT.—Baize to be swept carefully where glass is broken in the second act.

ELECTRICAL PLOT

ACT I

(Office Interior)

AT RISE.

Footlights 2 Circuits STRAW 1 Circuit
AMBER, FULL UP

Ceiling border 2 Circuits STRAW 1 Circuit
AMBER, FULL UP

Back border 1 Circuit STRAW 1 Circuit
AMBER, FULL UP

STRAW Arcs from R. and L. on back drop.

AMBER bunches in R. 1 E., R. 2 E., and L. 1 E.,
L. 2 E.,

Three 2-light brackets NOT PRAC.

(One between windows at c. One between
side doors.)

Two bells off-stage, L. (*Must* have different
sounds.)

A PAIR OF SIXES

Electric wall plate switch on wall below L. 2 E.
"A. D. T." Messenger Call, on wall between
large desk and door, R. 2 E.
"Your lights stand throughout this act."

ACT II

(Handsome Interior)

AT RISE.

Footlights FULL UP

Ceiling border FULL UP

Back border 1 circuit BLUE FULL UP.

BLUE Arcs outside window U. R. and win-
dows U. L.

AMBER bunnches in R. 1 E., R. 2 E., *and on*
stairs.

Three, 2-light brackets, PRAC. Pink silk
shades. AMBER globes.

(One above the mantel L., one below. One
between the two doors on the R. wall.)

One brass lamp, AMBER globe, on table 8,
PRAC.

One lamp on table 9. PRAC. Mahogany
stand, PINK silk shade.

Desk telephone instrument on table 9.

PRAC. telephone bell box placed back of
screen 14, to be worked from the fireplace,
L. 2.

Electric door bell, off-stage, R.

"All Brackets and table lamps lighted
throughout Acts II and III."

"Your lights stand throughout this act."

ACT III

(Same as Act II.)

AT RISE.

All lights the same as in Act II.

"Your lights stand throughout this act."

CUE PLOT

ACTS I, II, AND III.

ACT I

1 Door slam on first exit of Nettleton R. I.

NETTLETON

"System, do you get me? System!"

(The door is then held slightly ajar until the next slam)

2 JOHNS

"What he doesn't know"

Slam the door R. I.

3 JOHNS

"You do it my way or I'll discharge you"

Door slam L. I as Johns exits.

4 SALLY

"You looked so funny"

Buzzer off right followed by bell they ring continuously until——

SALLY

"Which one rang first?"

Buzzer and bell stop.

KROME

"Neither it was both at once"

Buzzer right until——

SALLY

"if I go to Mr. Nettleton"

As Sally is within a few feet of the door right—

Bell left, until——

SALLY

"if I go to Mr. Johns"

As Sally reaches left center the bell stops and buzzer, right, sounds.

As Sally starts back to right, the bell rings again,

" Devil chasers "

NETTLETON

" Bah "

Doors left first and right first are slammed hard
as Johns and Nettleton exit left and right.

ACT II

1 CODDLES

" H'm in the kitchen! "

Door slam left first as Coddles exits.

2 NETTLETON

" Remember the contract "

Door bell off right.

3 NETTLETON

" With such a trivial matter "

Door bell off right.

Nettleton to be notified where frame (of cards)
is knocked to by Johns.

4 NETTLETON

" All right I won't "

Door bell off right.

5 NETTLETON

" Clear out "

Door bell off right.

6

As Johns exits left after the above bell, door slam.

7

Florence is warned in time to laugh off-stage when
Johns places the coal scuttle by the fireplace.

8

CODDLES

" On the head with a hatchet "

Door slam on Coddles' exit left first and door bell
off right.

9

JOHNS

"Written on the eighteenth and this the twenty-fourth"

Door bell off right.

10

When Johns goes on from left first with the tray of cocktails, door is left open (Held open) until he exits with the tray, then closed. He enters again at once, the door is opened for him and held open until he exits again, then slammed. At this point the door must not be slammed too hard.

ACT III

1 Door left first to be opened for Johns at rise,

2

CODDLES

"The liberty of speaking to him"

Door left first is slammed hard as Coddles exits.

3

NETTLETON

"Oh but darling"

Phone rings twice.

(Phone is worked from off left and watched through the fireplace)

4

NETTLETON

"Nellie for heavens sake, don't"

As Nettleton kneels by Mrs. Nettleton ring phone.

Phone continues to ring until Nettleton crawls towards it, as he is within a few feet of phone, STOP.

Nettleton crawls back to Mrs. Nettleton.

NETTLETON

"Won't you even look at me"

Phone rings again, continues ringing until Johns opens the door up right.

5

MRS. NETTLETON

"The poor old telephone"

Door bell rings, which continues until Johns opens the door up right.

6

As Johns enters to answer the above bell, the door left first is held open and when he runs off, it is slammed as hard as possible.

7

Door is held open when Coddles goes on with cocktails the last part of act, as she exits after this door left first is slammed hard.

HK259-78



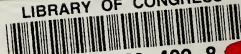


JUL 78



N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 018 349 402 8